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NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC TRAVELER

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ABOVE, COCONUT
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TORONTO, PAGE 43

EDITOR'S DESK

Confessions of an Airbnb Virgin

There is no better place to sample the peer-to-peer economy than where it sprouted, the fecund fields of northern California. Chief among the sharing-economy sites is the white-hot Airbnb, which connects travelers to people renting rooms, apartments, or even houseboats. That's how I met educators John and Cindy and booked their two-bedroom home in Mountain View for my recent family vacation. The house, though Lilliputian, was big on personality: Sunlit and book-filled, it even came with hand-waving next-door neighbors and a backyard tree dripping with fat oranges. I loved temporarily inhabiting this cool couple's crunchy NorCal life. But the quirky leftiness that so charmed me was off-putting to my family. "Is this a hotel or someone's house?" asked my son, who didn't quite get the concept. "There's a Buddha in



Rent a house and a social life.

our bedroom," said my slightly aghast, conservative Catholic mother. They eventually came around, but OK, so it's not for everyone. Luckily, lodging options have only multiplied in recent years, and however you roll, there's something for you in our Travel Intelligence guide, "8 Ways to Sleep Around," on page 58.

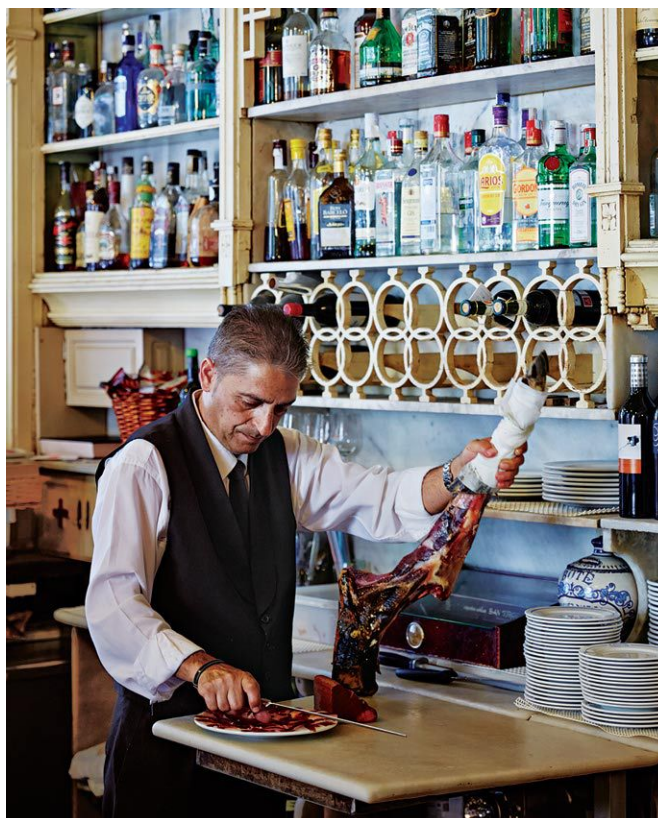
The sharing economy requires sharing—with real people. That can be a peril, especially for those who need to maximize time, but it's mostly a plus. I could have rented a car through Hertz or called for a taxi to tool around San Francisco.

But then I'd never have become Facebook friends with Rachel, whose Mazda CX-5 I reserved through RelayRides, or found Gourmet Dim Sum, the hole-in-the-wall on Clement Street in the Richmond district where you can buy three dumplings for \$1.50, had Davis, my Lyft driver, not taken me there. —*Norie Quintos*

OUTTAKE

A SLICE OF LIFE IN SEVILLE

Photographer John Kernick captured this moment at El Riconcillo, said to be the oldest bar in Seville, Spain, while on an assignment for "Spanish Inclination" (page 30). "Though this photo didn't end up in our feature, I was drawn to the well-dressed waiter—who's framed by beautiful light from a nearby window—by his look of careful concentration while expertly slicing Iberian ham for tapas, something he's probably done hundreds of times," says senior photo editor Carol Enquist.



WHAT I KNOW



ALEXANDER McCALL SMITH

WRITER

MY CITY: EDINBURGH
PAGE 12

Pint Stop

Visit Edinburgh's Canny Man's Pub, which features an eccentric collection of objects—a bit of an Aladdin's cave.

Next Up

I am traveling to Botswana and then to Cape Town, one of the most beautiful cities in the world.

Book It

Patrick Leigh Fermor's wonderful account of his trek across Europe in the 1930s would persuade anybody to get out their walking boots.

TALK TO US

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MAP QUESTS

A Century of Graphing the Globe

March marks the 100th anniversary of National Geographic's cartographic division—which has created maps, globes, and atlases of the ocean floor, the night sky, and everywhere in between. Here, a few highlights from our map-making history.



Tool of War

Our 1944 map of Germany served as Winston Churchill's personal briefing map, which history buffs can view at his Cabinet War Rooms in London.

Visual Aid

Maps made here focus on more than just land mass: They've measured meat consumption, opium production, and radioactivity in Chernobyl.

Escape Route

With a 1971 Nat Geo map as his guide, Nguyen Van Canh led 49 refugees out of communist Vietnam at the end of the Vietnam War.

VIP Swag

Incoming presidents receive a personalized map set from the Society—President Obama's detailed Hawaii, Kenya, and Indonesia.

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A cartographer at Nat Geo's D.C. headquarters in 1987

REST, ASSURED

NAT GEO-BRANDED LODGES

If you like our ethos, now you can stay at hotels and lodges around the world that share our passion for authenticity and sustainability. Here are three standouts from the new National Geographic Unique Lodges of the World collection.

At eco-resort **Rosalie Bay** (right) in Dominica, guests can help guide endangered sea turtles—which hatch safely on Rosalie's



black-sand shores—to the Caribbean Sea.

Peacefulness is an extra amenity in the hallowed halls of Bhutan's **Zhiwa Ling**. This completely handmade hotel contains a Buddhist temple built with 450-year-old wood from the Gangtey Monastery.

On Tetiaroa, a French Polynesian atoll owned by Marlon Brando, the **Brando** mixes LEED platinum sensibilities with privacy—each villa features its own pool and paparazzi-free beachfront view.

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I HEART MY CITY

Nashville, Tennessee

Joseph Hudak, senior editor of the online Rolling Stone Country, tells us where to find the tunes, twangs, and southern comfort cuisine in Tennessee's capital city.

When someone comes to visit me, the first place I take them is Peg Leg Porker for a pulled pork sandwich (top) and a Yazoo beer.

The best place to see live music is Mercy Lounge on Cannery Row, but if you're in the mood to dance, check out Robert's Western World on Lower Broadway.

The most random thing about my city is the replica of the Parthenon in Centennial Park.

Locals know to skip the two-hour-plus wait at the Loveless Café (even though its biscuits are the stuff of legend) and enjoy the southern family-style breakfast at Monell's instead.

You can see my city best from the Korean War Veterans Memorial Bridge, driving from East Nashville into downtown.

My favorite building in town is the Ryman Auditorium, onetime home of the Grand Ole Opry, because it is, hands down, the greatest brick-and-mortar structure in the entire United States.

My city is known for being the home of country music, but it's really a rock-and-roll town with an accent.

■ FOR MORE "I HEART MY CITY" POSTS, GO TO INTELLIGENTTRAVEL.NATIONALGEOGRAPHIC.COM.

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INSTAGRAM OF THE MONTH

Bonnie Highland Style

Outside Inverness, Scotland, photographer Jim Richardson captures a kilted reenactor playing the part of a Jacobite clansman in 1746's Battle of Culloden.

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MAILBOX

Lost Boys of the Bayou

In "The Weirdest Country in America" (October 2014), New Orleans-based writer Andrew Nelson navigated the quirky cultural landscape of Louisiana. Reader John Sampaga of **Reno, Nev.**, believes another important group in the Pelican State's diverse mix deserves recognition, too. "I missed seeing any reference to the 'Manila Men,' or Filipinos who were shanghaied to work on Spanish galleons during the 18th century,



and afterward built their own fishing settlements in Louisiana's bayous," he wrote. "It was an injustice to not include any mention of this hardy group of early Americans."

WORDS TO TRAVEL BY

Butcher's (n.) Cockney slang for "look," this British colloquialism derives from rhyming "butcher's hook" with "look." Example: "*Come have a butcher's at all the tourists posing with the Royal Guard.*"



FROM THE NAT GEO STORE

These bright resin bracelets, made by the Nusantara company, feature illustrations from vintage advertisements salvaged from an antique shop in Jaipur, India. \$18 to \$20

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OOPS!

After our November 2014 issue mentioned that South Korea's Jeju Island boasts the world's longest lava tube, readers quickly pointed out our tunnel vision. Kazumura Cave (above) on Hawaii's Big Island runs for more than 40 miles, surpassing Jeju's as the lengthiest lava-formed cave.

TRAVELER

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SMART TRAVELER

Posters announce
an upcoming art
festival in Sharjah,
a cultural hub
in the United
Arab Emirates.

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Your Shot: Norway 16 Bookshelf, Problem Solved 18 Kids in Ottawa, Austin Art 20 Skiing the Haute Route 22 Silicon Valley 23



On Edinburgh's Calton Hill. Right: Glass and Thompson café



MY CITY

Street Dreams

In fiction and in real life, Edinburgh is No. 1 BY ALEXANDER MCCALL SMITH

SOME YEARS AGO I started to write a serial novel, *44 Scotland Street*, set in Edinburgh. In this series—now in its ninth volume—I wanted to explain why it was that this city should so beguile those who come to know it; why each morning makes me feel as if I am waking up to a continuing love affair with the place in which I live.

There are many reasons why one should want to write about Edinburgh. The capital of Scotland is one of the most artistically interesting cities in the world, in the same league as Florence or Venice. It sits between rolling hills and the east coast of Scotland, a country with a stirring past and a haunting, romantic landscape. It is a place known for its cultural festivals, and particularly for the Edinburgh International

Festival and its Festival Fringe, which, for a giddy month each summer, make it the arts capital of the world. It is a place of ideas, the birthplace of the Scottish Enlightenment, that extraordinary moment in the 18th century when Edinburgh briefly became the intellectual capital of Europe. More recently it has been at the heart of an intense political debate about Scottish independence—an experience that has made its citizens look more closely at the issue of who they want to be. It is not a dull place.

I decided to base this series of books in one particular street, and a real one at that. Imaginary locations may have their place in fiction, but I have always preferred to know exactly where I am. Why should authors be coy? I chose a

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street in what is known as Edinburgh's New Town. The word "new" is relative: In Edinburgh the late 18th century counts as new enough, the Old Town being the ridge of narrow streets and alleyways that grew up from the city's official foundation in the 12th century. The creation of the New Town was a response to the overcrowded and insanitary conditions that had become an increasing problem. Edinburgh is a place of hills, but on the other side of the Nor Loch, fetid and calling out for draining, lay a tempting stretch of land running down toward the sea, the obvious place to build a city from scratch. A competition was held, and James Craig, an untrained architect still in his 20s, came up with a classical design, a grid of elegant streets, punctuated here and there by squares and crescents. That classical vision remains, in the largest body of unspoiled Georgian architecture to be found anywhere in the British Isles. It is a vast architectural museum, but one in which people still live and work—and some of them actually work in the city's many museums, including the Scottish National Portrait Gallery, on Queen Street, a great place to immerse yourself in Scottish art and history and then refresh yourself in its café (legendary scones).

I needed a street, and I found it in short, steep Scotland Street, at the eastern end of the New Town. Residential buildings line either side of Scotland Street, made of the stone that was used to construct the whole New Town. Like all the other streets in the area, its style is classic Georgian, with an emphasis on regularity and uniformity. That is the key to the aesthetic appeal of the New Town—beauty lies in the clean lines of doors and windows that are of the same pleasing proportions, house after house.

I placed many of the characters in apartments running off a single stair, the term used in Edinburgh for the communal stone staircase that unites dwellings under a common roof. It is a living arrangement that has helped to create and preserve the strong sense of community that prevails in Edinburgh. Rich and poor never lived too far part in the Old Town, and even in the more prosperous New Town, a good social mix always prevailed.



Look at me: performers at the Edinburgh Festival Fringe (top) and paintings at the National Portrait Gallery (above)



Once I had created my characters, I found I could let them loose in the city, and in their lives. They seemed to make the choice for me, gravitating to work and play in Dundas Street, not far from Scotland Street, which affords arresting views toward the ancient Kingdom of Fife (long absorbed into modern Scotland), on the other side of the Firth of Forth. At the top of Dundas Street, just round the corner from the home on Heriot Row of the great 19th-century Scottish writer Robert Louis Stevenson, is a favorite café, Glass and Thompson, frequented by my friends and by my characters. A few doors down is the Scottish Gallery, run by Guy Peploe, grandson of one of Scotland's best-known painters, S. J. Peploe. Peploe appears as a character in my books, as I like to put real people into them—with their consent, of course. Edinburgh is that sort of place: People may be factual and fictional at one and the same time.

Edinburgh's atmospheric bars also make useful settings for fictional characters. Mine go to the Cumberland Bar, a cheerful and welcoming place at the end of Cumberland Street. My fellow Edinburgh writer, Ian Rankin, sends his fictional detective, Inspector John Rebus, to the Oxford Bar, in Thistle Street. Ian's books are darker than mine, and his characters prefer darker, simpler bars. Each to his own.

Fictional characters have to go shopping, of course, and I regularly send mine to a real Italian delicatessen in Elm Row, Valvona and Crolla, owned by Philip and Mary Contini, both of whom appear as characters in the Scotland Street novels. At launches for the books, Philip shows up to play music with his Neapolitan band. Fact and fiction meet in this city all the time. And why not? Edinburgh is a place in which the imagination seems to thrive. There is something in the air here, something in the light. I'm not sure exactly what it is, but it's there. Edinburgh has been called a dream in stone. Perhaps that explains it.

ALEXANDER McCALL SMITH is the author of *The No. 1 Ladies Detective Agency* series and two series set in Edinburgh. His new novel, *Emma: A Modern Retelling*, comes out in April.



THE NEW WINNEBAGO

Downsizing the Double-Wide

Campers have come a long way since the Pierce-Arrow Touring Landau debuted in 1910, complete with a chamber pot. Today's models are smaller, more eco-friendly, and can be controlled by tablet. The Roadtrek E-Trek boasts solar panels, EverGreen RV's trailers consist of sustainable materials, and the Teardrop Buzz is light enough for fuel-efficient vehicles to tow without hogging the highway. —JEANNETTE KIMMEL

THROWBACK

TIME WARP ON THE THAMES



Fans of 1975's *Rocky Horror Picture Show* know Oakley Court as the phoneless castle where the

overly lip-glossed Tim Curry thrilled Susan Sarandon in the B-movie musical.

"Half the roof was missing, and the other half was leaking," Sarandon recalls. "It was freezing cold, and I got pneumonia."

Forty years later, the Oakley Court Hotel in Windsor, England, is anything but chilling. Situated along the River Thames, the Gothic manor features 118 modern rooms (starting at \$200) with wingback chairs and king-size beds fit for a queen—specifically when Queen Elizabeth II paid a visit in 2009—while elaborate Victorian mantels reign over sitting rooms. The French-inspired restaurant looks onto the formerly eerie estate's 35 manicured acres that include a golf course, croquet lawn, and tennis courts. Plus, the castle now has telephones. —*Steve Larese*



At England's Oakley Court, sleep where Tim Curry once sang.



Bananas Foster at Brennan's

LOCAL FLAVOR

A Classic Comes Home

Bananas Foster brings its spark back to the Big Easy

BRENNAN'S HAS RECONNECTED with an old flame. Bananas Foster was invented at this New Orleans institution in 1951, and, after the restaurant's 2013 closure and expansive refurbishing, the flammable, rum-soaked dessert will once again light up the French Quarter. "It was the first tableside dish I nervously prepared when I was a boy," says Ralph Brennan, Brennan's new owner and nephew of the original proprietor. "The smell of butter and sugar caramelizing always brings me back to my childhood." The main ingredient of the signature dish—bananas—now grows in the updated courtyard, along with jasmine and orange trees. And the booze isn't limited to dessert, either—Brennan's was one of the early supporters of the brunch trend. "We served more wine at breakfast than dinner," says Brennan. With that late-morning tradition resumed, this year's Mardi Gras weekend revelers will be in especially high spirits. —*Hannah Sheinberg*

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BRIGHT IDEA

New Uses for Old Plane Seats

The fabric from 80,000 airplane seats could stretch to the top of the Empire State Building—six times. For Southwest Airlines’ **LUV Seat** initiative, that’s more than 17,000 leather goods, restitched to benefit developing countries. After a 2012 retrofit of cabins, the airline partnered with nonprofits to up-cycle the covers into shoes, soccer balls, and more, while also helping new jobs take off. —HANNAH LOTT-SCHWARTZ



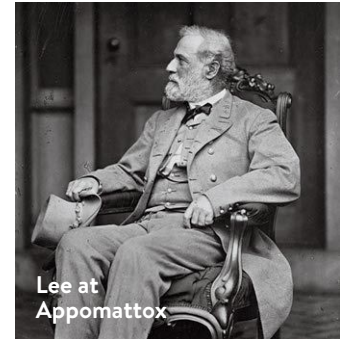
Sharjah’s Al Noor Mosque overlooks the Khalid Lagoon.

POSTCARD FROM SHARJAH

The Unsung Emirate

WHILE STRIFE-WEARY Middle Eastern grandes dames Beirut, Cairo, and Tehran have all seen better days, Sharjah—glitzy Dubai’s demure neighbor in the United Arab Emirates—is a cultural doyenne with a vision. Crowned “Islamic Cultural Capital” in 2014, the emirate of Sharjah manages to combine artistic progress and an affection for conservative tradition. A total of 16 museums—including the Sharjah Art Museum, featuring an extensive orientalist painting collection—canvases the small emirate of around 700,000 people, but artistic beauty isn’t confined to galleries. Here stately *barjeels*, or wind towers, top timeworn houses that hug a creek teeming with traditional dhows (sailboats). On the eastern coast, crumbling

17th-century Portuguese forts punctuate the shorelines along the Gulf of Oman. In February, the city’s refined landmarks turn kaleidoscopic during the Sharjah Light Festival, where designers project a psychedelic palette of lights onto mosques, squares, and souks. Bet you didn’t know that in contemporary art circles, the emirate boasts an avant-garde reputation due to the 22-year-old Sharjah Biennial—three months of thought-provoking exhibits, performances, and screenings that galvanize the worldwide art set. This year’s biennial begins March 5, when installations will dot the desert landscape—past commissions include a giant interactive cymbal mobile and a pop-up garden with tea service. —Kevin Jones



Lee at Appomattox

LAST BLAST

CIVIL WAR WRAP-UP

As the 150th anniversary of the Civil War draws to a close, head to these mid-Atlantic sites. They played a pivotal role in America’s deadliest conflict.

RICHMOND, VA. The burning and evacuation of Richmond on April 2, 1865, signaled the beginning of the end of the war. Experience the fall of the Confederate capital from multiple perspectives (including that of enslaved residents) via exhibits; a walking tour retraces the route of President Lincoln’s visit. April 2-4.

APPOMATTOX, VA. Confederate Gen. Robert E. Lee surrendered to Union Gen. Ulysses S. Grant on April 9, 1865. They met at the McLean House, where Confederate reenactors will lay down their weapons in the stacking of arms ceremony. April 10-11.

WASHINGTON, D.C. At 10:15 p.m. on April 14, 1865, John Wilkes Booth shot President Lincoln at Ford’s Theatre. Around-the-clock events re-create the frantic scene inside the theater. April 14-15. —MARYELLEN DUCKETT

YOUR SHOT

NORWAY NIGHT RIDER

Photographing landscapes well is harder than one might think. “Even the most scenic sites need a discerning eye to make a picture special,” says *Traveler*’s director of photography, Daniel Westergren. “The default is to shoot images that include everything—except a personal point of view.” German photo enthusiast **Christoph Schaarschmidt** solved this by waiting patiently to get his shot. “It was my dream to take a photo of light trails,” he says. “When I found this perfect vantage point on the Trollstigen Mountain Road, in **Norway**, fog obscured the scene.” Schaarschmidt lingered, poised to shoot—until 1 a.m., when the fog cleared. “Luckily, a car was driving up the steep switchbacks, creating my light trail. I clicked away. Within minutes the fog had returned.”

A great photo, notes Westergren, “captures a feeling that goes deeper than a literal visual record. In this case, the moody weather made all the difference.”

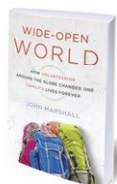
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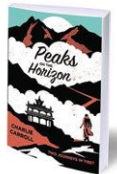
The Trollstigen, or "trolls' path," winds up from Geirangerfjord on Norway's central coast.

BOOKSHELF Reads to Get You Going



WIDE-OPEN WORLD
By JOHN MARSHALL

The Marshalls learn that six months of sweaty volunteerism draw them together as no family therapist ever can. Don't miss the spider monkey encounter.



PEAKS ON THE HORIZON
By CHARLIE CARROLL

Two different journeys interweave in this memoir/escape thriller—one into and the other out of a fascinating but troubled Tibet.



CROW FAIR
By THOMAS MCGUANE

This short story collection from a master captures the essence of Montana, from its oil fields to its aging cowboys.

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Air rescue in
Tirol, Austria

PROBLEM SOLVED

When the Only Way Out Is Up

By CHRISTOPHER ELLIOTT

NEED HELP?

Editor at Large
Christopher
Elliott is our
consumer
advocate and
author of *How
to Be the World's
Smartest Traveler*.

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Q. My friend had a heart attack while vacationing. He had to be medevaced home, which cost him \$30,000—even though he had travel insurance. What gives? Most travel insurance policies cover only what they say they cover—typically, transportation to the nearest available medical facility. Read the fine print: Look for clauses that address hospitalization and evacuations, pay close attention to when they'll kick in, and make sure you have enough coverage, says Linda Kundell, a spokesperson for the trade group US Travel Insurance Association. Alternatively, a “cancel for any reason” policy allows you to call off your entire vacation and receive 70 to 80 percent of your money back. Alas, such policies can cost between 10 and 12 percent of the price of your trip, versus 6 to 8 percent for a garden-variety policy. Or, if medevac bills are your top concern, you could buy a membership in a company like MedJetAssist; an annual \$260 fee generally covers up to two evacuations a year, with some restrictions for travelers over 75.

Q. I've developed a fear of flying. What to do? About one out of every four people has some level of aerophobia, and an estimated 10 percent of travelers have a more severe case, which could ground you permanently. Fortunately, coping strategies exist. British Airways offers the long-running “fear of flying” clinics, in operation for 29 years. Led by working pilots and cabin crew, “Flying With Confidence” gives a primer on the basics of flying, with a special emphasis on safety features. Participants then visit a parked plane, and 98 percent opt to take a graduation flight. (Cost is between \$315 and \$475, depending on the airport.) Stateside, Soar's courses range from a class on DVD (\$125) to a two-hour counseling session (\$595) with Captain Tom Bunn, a pilot and licensed therapist. No one can guarantee such classes will zap fears, but Soar sessions promise money back “if you're unhappy with the improvement.” You can use the refund to visit a psychologist—another effective method of overcoming aerophobia.

FRITS MEYST/ADVENTURE4EVER.COM/REDUX (HELICOPTER)



Set the mood.

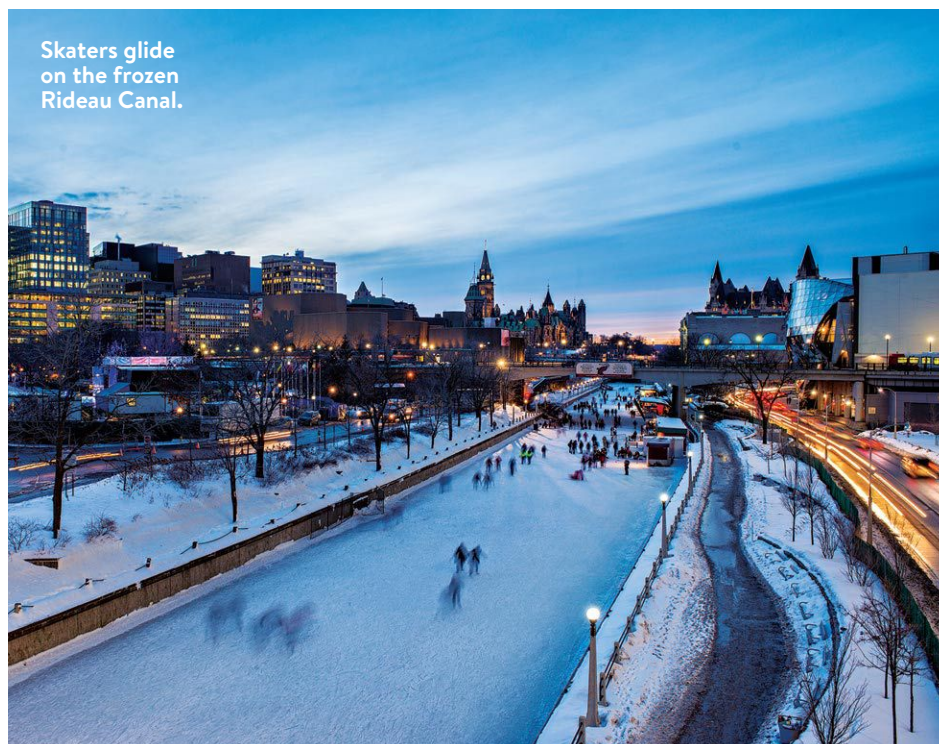
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Skaters glide on the frozen Rideau Canal.

TRAVELING WITH KIDS

Canada's Capital of Chill

By HEATHER GREENWOOD DAVIS

Q. We want to take our grandkids to Ottawa for a blast of winter.

Best spots? Canada's capital city gets a good dose of winter every year, and locals celebrate it with gusto. Spend a day or two on essential experiences: Skate on the 125-mile-long Rideau Canal; explore the Winterlude festivities, which include ice sculptures and a snow playground; eat like a Canadian (Beaver Tails—fried dough dusted with sugar—are a wintertime favorite). Catch a pickup hockey game in action at any local rink, or book seats in advance for the home team Ottawa Senators. Candace Derickx, a 15-year veteran of the city who runs the lifestyle website *Life in Pleasantville*, suggests discovering nearby Gatineau Park (25 minutes from the city center) for snowshoeing, cross-country skiing, and downhill skiing (at

NEED HELP?

For more from family-travel blogger Heather Greenwood Davis, visit our *Intelligent Travel* blog.

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@greenwooddavis

Camp Fortune). "The mountains are just the right height for beginners," says Derickx.

Q. Can my child fly on her own to visit her grandparents in Dallas? Airline rules for unaccompanied minors vary, but most allow children ages 5 through 14 to fly alone domestically on direct flights. SeatGuru.com has a search engine that allows you to see the "minors" policy for a host of airlines. Expect to pay an extra fee (\$100 to \$150) on top of the airfare. Kids flying alone for the first time may have some anxiety. Prepare by knowing what to expect at departure and arrival (whether family can escort her to and from the gate depends on the airline). Her carry-ons should include a phone and numbers for those she's meeting; a few snacks will tide her over until she lands.

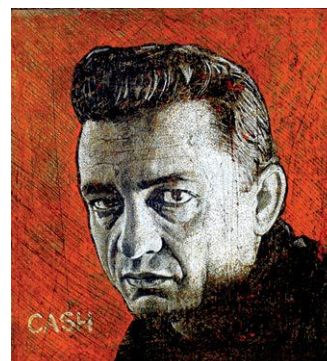
OUTSIDER ART

AUSTIN KEEPS IT WEIRD

The Texas capital's many music clubs host live performances every night of the year—and multiple times an evening during March's annual South by Southwest festival. But Austin's **HOPE Outdoor Gallery** showcases a very different creative output: artists legally spray-painting on a three-story abandoned construction site. Dragons, anime heroines, and the occasional "Will you marry me?" cover concrete foundations that sprawl down the hillside. "The way the park looks can change every 48 hours," says Andi Scull Cheatham, a local artist who spearheaded the concept.

Folksy visuals are at home in other corners of this proudly weird city, including **Yard Dog Art**, a 20-year-old gallery trafficking in outsider pieces, such as local painter Brian Salvi's haunting oil-on-plywood portraits of Native American leaders, and rocker Jon Langford's textured paintings of musicians (below). During SXSW, Yard Dog hosts daytime concerts and barbecue bashes.

The quirkiest masterpiece in Austin might be the **Cathedral of Junk**, an appointment-only installation in artist Vince Hannemann's backyard. Old tires, rubber ducks, and box springs unite in a sci-fi movielike "garden," a space that's both gritty and pretty, much like Austin itself. —JENNIFER BARGER

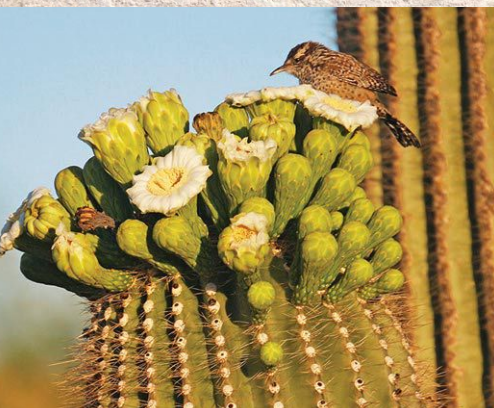


Portrait of Johnny Cash

OTTAWA TOURISM (CANAL); "CASH (ON RED)" BY JON LANGFORD/RANDY FRANKLIN (PORTRAIT)

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ABOUT THE PHOTOGRAPHERS



One of the first women photographers to work for National Geographic, **Annie Griffiths** has photographed in nearly 150 countries during her illustrious career. She has worked on dozens of magazine and book projects for the Society, including stories on Lawrence of Arabia, Baja California, Galilee, Petra, Sydney, New Zealand, and Jerusalem.



As director of photography for *National Geographic Traveler*, **Dan Westergren** is responsible for the magazine's photographic vision. While under his watchful eye, the magazine has won numerous awards for photography. Dan is also an accomplished photographer and an experienced teacher, having led workshops for National Geographic all over the world.

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ADVENTURE 101

Swiftly Through the Alps

Ski touring the Haute Route from France to Switzerland

TRADERS AND SHEPHERDS have traveled through the high passes of the Alps for centuries, but it wasn't until 1911 that the first skiers completed what is now known as the Haute Route: a six-day, 46-mile traverse through the skyscraping peaks between Chamonix, France, and Zermatt, Switzerland, two of the continent's iconic ski resorts. Since then, huts have sprung up along the way to offer food and lodging, and the Haute Route has become a rite of passage for adventurous skiers. "People are blown away when they see how big and

A skier pushes through a glade of trees along Europe's Haute Route.

rugged the terrain is," says John Race, owner of Northwest Mountain School, which leads trips each year. "And yet the big appeal is it's all so accessible and you only need to carry a light pack to stay in relative comfort."

GETTING STARTED Those tackling the Haute Route should be proficient backcountry skiers with experience using ski touring equipment, which includes bindings that allow heels to lift for heading uphill and skins, pieces of fabric with a grain that, when attached to skis, allow forward but not backward motion. Days can include more than 3,000 feet of climbing, so fitness is

essential. (Other hut-to-hut routes in the Alps offer shorter, easier options.) Most Haute Route skiers hire guides and set off for Geneva, the closest airport to Chamonix, in March or April, when avalanches are less frequent. On the first day of a trip, guides lead a warm-up run, starting with a ride up the Aiguille du Midi, a cable that glides 12,000 vertical feet from village to peak in 20 minutes. From there, the Vallée Blanche, one of the area's legendary ski runs, meanders gently more than 12 miles over the Mer de Glace glacier, between granite spires, and past a blue-ice cave down to the valley floor.

HIGH CLIMB On the first day of the Haute Route—one of the most challenging legs—take the tram at the Grand Montets ski area up to 10,762 feet, which, on a clear day, offers a spectacular view of the Chamonix Valley and Mont Blanc. Over more than six hours, climb for some 3,350 feet, descend 3,700 vertical feet, and cross two glaciers to the Trient Hut, with views of a plateau backed by summits.

REST AND REFUEL Most days, skiers wake early and ski to the next hut for lunch. "There's generally a lot of free time in the afternoons—and a significant amount of beer drinking," says Race. Some guests go out for leisurely ski runs; others play cards on sun-warmed decks, swap stories, and watch the alpenglow fade from the peaks. Dinner—classic Swiss meat-and-potatoes fare—is served family style. If you're friendly with the hut warden, you might get a nightcap of homemade *génépi*, an absinthe-like spirit distilled with Alpine wildflowers, before sacking out in a bunk room.

GRAND FINALE On the last day, skiers climb up and down three Alpine passes, dip into Italy, and reach the high Col du Valpelline, which has views of the toothy north face of the Matterhorn, one of the Alps' most recognizable profiles. From there, it's more than a vertical mile of descending to the tony village of Zermatt. "We're skiing between huge glaciers, icefalls, and massive faces," says Race. "Very few skiers wouldn't describe it as the best downhill run of their lives." —*Kate Siber*

GEEK TOUR SILICON VALLEY FOR DUMMIES

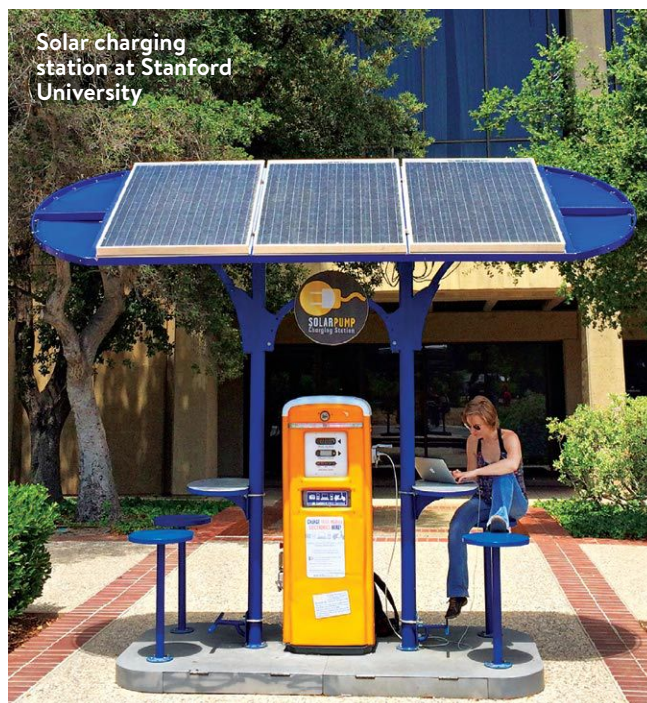
Want to meet Siri? Come face-to-face with Facebook? Pay a visit to PayPal? Much of your disposable income ends up in this high-tech corridor south of San Francisco, so the next time you're in the city, take the CalTrain down, rent a car (or Lyft it), and follow this tour.

IN THE BEGINNING

The Nobel Laureate-studded **Stanford University** has incubated innovators since the late 1930s. The historical heart of the campus is the Quad, with its stately palms and what some students call Mexican restaurant architecture, but what vivifies the school and keeps it central to all things techie is the collection of sleek engineering buildings with names like Allen, Yang, and Gates.



A short drive outside the campus is the Hewlett-Packard Garage—arguably the birthplace of Silicon Valley—where two Stanford students developed an audio oscillator in 1939. Since then, every start-up seemingly needs a garage creation myth; you may want to do a drive-by of the garage at Steve Jobs's childhood home at 2066 Crist Drive in Los Altos and the house where Facebook founder Mark Zuckerberg spent his first summer in Palo Alto (819 La Jennifer



Way). Stop for coffee at **Coupa Café**, on University Avenue in Palo Alto, a favorite caffeine-ator of engineers and investors.

THE ELECTRIC COMPANY

Next, drive the old-school gas car to the **Tesla Motors** showroom on El Camino Real. The company was founded in Silicon Valley, and the cars are built in

the area too. Look under the hood of the latest Model S (no engine, all storage space).

FOLLOW THE MONEY

There's not much to see on Sand Hill Road, in Menlo Park,



Tesla Model S



but along this unassuming swath of pavement are many of the venture capital firms that fuel the start-ups. And just where do those VCs and angel investors eat? Most of them have been to **Buck's**, in Woodside, at some point. (Ask nicely and the waiter will point out tables where Hotmail and PayPal were dreamed up.)

HAIL TO THE CHIEFS

You can't get through a day without checking your iPhone or Googling something, so don't leave South Bay without a visit to the undisputed titans of consumer tech. At **Apple's** headquarters, there's a store that sells logo tees and other items only available here. **Google's** HQ is closed to the public, but you can walk around and get glimpses of the clownish bikes employees use to get around the "Googleplex."

Process all this information—and fill in any gaps—at the far-more-interesting-than-its-name-suggests **Computer History Museum**. Punched cards, a vintage TRS-80, floppy disks—they're all there. —NORIE QUINTOS





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The FINAL 4

OUR PICKS FOR SLAM-DUNK COLLEGE TOWNS

WHEN SPRING FEVER strikes, only two things dominate: basketball brackets and easy getaways. Stoke your school spirit—and youthful energy—on a NCAA college visit. Because no matter what happens during March Madness, these towns always fire us up.

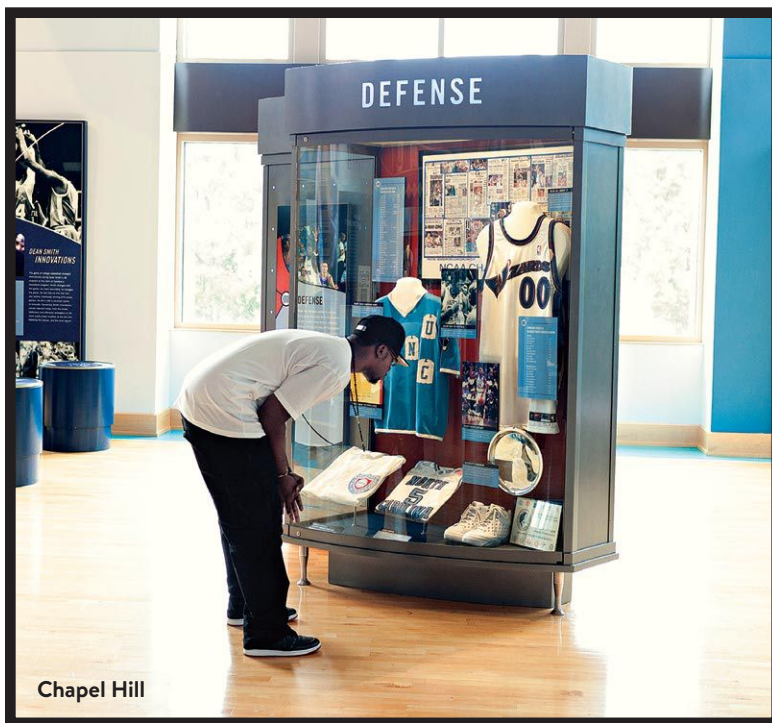
University of Kansas **LAWRENCE, KANSAS**

WHAT'S THE HOOPLA: Basketball was invented when James Naismith introduced his new sport to the University of Kansas in 1898 and became the first coach of the Jayhawks. **TEAM SPIRIT:** If you think you spy fans in the stands of Allen Fieldhouse doing “the wave” wrong, that’s because they’re actually “waving the wheat”—a tradition that mimics the state’s top crop swaying in the prairie breeze. **FAN PICK:** Sip a pint of Wheat State Golden beer at Free State Brewery, a downtown institution since 1989. **LOCAL FLAVOR:** If college nostalgia stirs up your taste buds, the Roost serves breakfast cocktails spiked with Frosted Flakes or sage tequila. **BEYOND BASKETBALL:** In the 1850s, Lawrence was a bloody frontier for abolitionists. A free-spirited vein still courses throughout downtown’s Massachusetts Street, from Final Friday art walks to historic Eldridge Hotel, built as an antislavery respite and subsequently burned down and rebuilt—twice.

■ WHAT'S YOUR FAVORITE COLLEGE TOWN? SHARE IT WITH US USING #NGCOLLEGETOWNS.



Syracuse



Chapel Hill

The Carolina Basketball Museum (above), near the “Dean Dome” on UNC’s campus, enshrines Jordan jerseys and other sports memorabilia. Glen Johnson (top) enjoys a beer with friends at Coleman’s Irish Pub, a 1933 saloon featuring traditional pub fare and live music in Syracuse’s historic Tipperary Hill.

RON AND JOE/SHUTTERSTOCK (NUMBER), ALEXANDRA HOOTNICK (PEOPLE), JEREMY M. LANGE (MAIN)



University of North Carolina
CHAPEL HILL, NORTH CAROLINA

WHAT'S THE HOOPLA: The Tar Heels basketball legacy counts Michael Jordan as an alum. **FAN PICK:** Top of the Hill Restaurant and Brewery ("Top-o" in localese) tips off a night on the town, with a prime roof deck vantage for watching post-victory partying on Franklin Street. **LOCAL FLAVOR:** Crook's Corner elevates classics like shrimp and grits and buttermilk pie, and Lantern reinvents Asian fusion with a Carolina kick (local pork, spring rolls, Korean-style fried chicken). **BEYOND BASKETBALL:** Coker Arboretum provides sanctuary from the hubbub and ushers in spring with dogwood blossoms and daffodils, while the antebellum Carolina Inn has sat on the sidelines of campus activity since 1924.

Gonzaga University
SPOKANE, WASHINGTON

WHAT'S THE HOOPLA: Most of the year, Gonzaga University quietly minds its own business at the confluence of the inland Northwest's ski slopes and the Columbia River Basin. During March Madness, this small Jesuit school unleashes the Bulldogs, wreaking havoc as only an underdog could. **TEAM SPIRIT:** Also known as the Kennel, the McCarthy Athletic Center boasts men's college basketball's best home-court record. **FAN PICK:** Sports lovers congregate near campus at Jack & Dan's Tavern, a bar famously tied to NBA and "Zag" alum John Stockton. **LOCAL FLAVOR:** Shaped like a 1950s milk bottle, Mary Lou's serves up patty melts and huckleberry milk shakes. **BEYOND BASKETBALL:** Natural thrills rule the city. The 37-mile paved Centennial Trail winds through town along the Spokane River, connecting campus to downtown and Riverfront Park.

Syracuse University
SYRACUSE, NEW YORK

WHAT'S THE HOOPLA: The chill of upstate New York is no match for Syracuse Orange fever. Head coach Jim Boeheim ranks among history's winningest coaches, having led his team into the postseason 37 out of 38 times. **FAN PICK:** The legacy of 19th-century Irish immigrants who took refuge in Syracuse's salt industry lives on in Tipperary Hill's traditional pubs, such as Coleman's, which dates to 1933. **LOCAL FLAVOR:** Farm-to-barrel Empire Brewing Company's menu ranges from po'boys to poutine. **BEYOND BASKETBALL:** Syracuse high points include the LEED Platinum Hotel Skyler, the rebounded historic downtown of Armory Square, and the Everson Museum of Art. —Katie Knorovsky



A bronze statue of "Zag" the bulldog, Gonzaga University's team mascot (above), welcomes visitors to the McCarthy Athletic Center, in Spokane, Washington. The Roost serves breakfast cocktails, including six iterations of the Bloody Mary (top), alongside classic egg dishes and "sammys" in Lawrence, Kansas.

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Seville's Metropol Parasol, currently the world's largest wood structure, updates the skyline. Flamenco dancers, here on break (opposite), carry on a cultural tradition.

Spanish Inclination

IN SEVILLE,
A LITTLE CHANGE IS
A GOOD THING



BY BRUCE SCHOENFELD PHOTOGRAPHS BY JOHN KERNICK



A horseman and two toreros ready for a bullfight in the Maestranza, Seville's storied bullring. Painted tiles (opposite) announce the tapas bar El Patio San Eloy.

Pata negra hams hang above the small wooden bar of El Rinconcillo like Christmas stockings. Around me, servers are delivering tapas of marinated anchovies, fried *croquetas*, and exquisitely sliced ham in an improvised ballet that has taken place here since 1670, when this Seville restaurant first opened its doors. Moorish hand-painted tiles, variations of which seem to adorn every corner of this ancient Spanish city, decorate the walls. The conversation buzzes in the Andalusian Spanish I learned to understand while living here in the 1980s. Suddenly, I notice an elderly man shuffling toward a woman at a nearby table. He's wearing a suit he might have purchased in the 1940s and an expression on his face straight out of a Goya painting. With great ceremony, he hands the woman a waxy paper napkin with writing on it. "A poem for you," he says. Then he bows. She reads it aloud.

*Viste de negro
Tiene una melena maravilla y
Eres mas Hermosa que la noche con
Estrellas!
Besos**

I arrived in Seville an hour ago, after six years away; the dulling anywhereness of air travel still covers me like a shawl. Yet a few moments inside El Rinconcillo are enough to remind me why this city is my favorite. A courtly man approaching a woman he doesn't know, spontaneous verse in hand, with the sole intent of acknowledging her beauty, is something that typically doesn't happen in the 21st century. It still happens here.

A comet's tail of patrons, each one holding a glass of something, trails out the front door and onto the street. Yet apart from its long history, this wood-beamed bar is just one of dozens, even hundreds, of similar bars throughout the city. In the nearly 30 visits I've made to Seville, including living here for nine months while researching a book a quarter century ago, I've never set foot in the place. Nevertheless, I know it intimately.

MORE THAN ANYWHERE ELSE I have been, Seville resists change. From its passion for bullfights to a fondness for the pageantry and spectacle of the Catholic religion, the capital of Andalusia always has reveled in its traditional way of life.

"Sevilla is a feminine city," author James Michener wrote in *Iberia*, his 1968 masterpiece about Spain. He noted "the



forbidding femininity of a testy old dowager set in her preferences and self-satisfied in her behavior," then added, "It is not by accident that Sevilla has always been most loyal to movements that in the rest of Spain are in decline."

This puts it in a tricky position for the Internet age, which dictates that a city looking backward risks being left behind. But for those of us who return to smell the orange blossoms, walk beneath old church arcades, and applaud the artistry of bullfights, such predictability is nothing short of miraculous.

"Every time you come here, you say the same thing," my friend Irene López-Melendo chides me when I call to say I've arrived. "Nothing else you know is as constant as Seville."

When I'm in Seville, I fall back on old habits. For one thing, I sleep hours later than at home. The city sits in Spain's southwestern corner,

an hour's drive from the Atlantic Ocean and at the far western edge of its time zone. It really should be in the next one over, with Lisbon, not Berlin. The narrow streets don't receive full sunshine in the springtime until late morning, yet the sun lingers until nearly 10 p.m.

As a result, Sevillanos dine even later than most Spaniards, often not until midnight. That means arriving at work bleary-eyed if you're a resident, one explanation for the city's famed

**Vision in black / You have marvelous long hair and / You are more beautiful than the night with stars! / Kisses*

lack of productivity. Beyond that, the old buildings have thick walls that deter the heat and wooden shutters that close tight against the day. Thus it's barely a surprise when I open my eyes my first morning just moments before the church bells toll noon.

I'm staying at a hotel, Palacio de Villapanés, that I remember as an ornate private residence. On my way for a cup of tea, I cross burnished parquet floors under vaulted ceilings. Portraits of matadors line the freshly painted walls. My minibar, I've already noted approvingly, is stocked with Manzanilla sherry.

The whole city seems to have a new coat of paint. Formerly downtrodden neighborhoods appear to be thriving. When I last visited, the Alameda de Hércules, one of Europe's oldest public gardens, was overgrown with weeds; its two Roman columns presided over an informal parking lot for the Cineplex, and drug addicts made deals under the poplar trees. I'd get propositioned as I walked to see a movie, even in daylight. Now I see tapas bars on all sides, filled with crowds of people snacking and sipping.

"Seville is doing really well," López-Melendo tells me when we meet for a glass of wine at an Alameda bar. "But the question is whether it's sustainable. Andalusia doesn't actually make anything, so tourism is very important. If we change the city

too much, people won't want to come." She's 50, from an old-line conservative family that was still mourning the death of Francisco Franco when we met in 1989. A student then, she and her group of friends would meet at the same bars nightly. Any attempt I'd make to steer the group toward somewhere down the street or around the corner would be met with incredulity.

"*Hombre*," she'd say. "Our group goes to these bars."

So I understand her discomfort watching the city evolve. I, too, sense an accommodation to today's international travelers, who might expect CNN in their hotel room, perhaps even sushi for dinner. As I take the meandering walks that the labyrinthine city all but demands from its visitors, I'm surprised to find paths for jogging—though I can't imagine my Sevillano friends doing any form of exercise—and a gleaming new Metro system. Thankfully, they don't appear to have supplanted the elements that make Seville unique. On pedestrian Calle Sierpes, I step inside Juan Foronda, a store filled with the lace mantillas that women wear during Seville's annual April fair, or Feria.

There is one controversial addition to the cityscape: The Metropol Parasol, a huge canopy structure that looks like a crosshatched potato chip. Supported by columns thick as bridge piers and sprawling across most of two city blocks, it was designed to shade reincarnated Plaza de la Encarnación and to "activate," in architect Jürgen Mayer Hermann's words, this workmanlike part of the city with new bars, restaurants, and shopping venues.

I wander beneath the canopy, thankful for the shade on a warm day, then take an escalator down to see Roman ruins that were excavated during its construction. From there, I ride an elevator up to the structure's top level (a three-euro fee includes, in a wonderfully Sevillano touch, a complimentary glass of beer or wine). Stepping out, I find myself up on an elevated boardwalk that dips and curves with the wood "parasol" like a bobsled run. Before me extends a panorama of the city—a series of panoramas, actually, because the vantage point changes with every step I take. I want to be disdainful, because placing this post-modern construction—what López-Melendo called "a big mistake"—in the midst of an ancient city is a ridiculous idea. But each turn brings an unexpected vista, and I stop and stare. Soon, I'm rehearsing what I will say to López-Melendo. "What it does, it does very well." And: "You have to admit, there really is nothing like it anywhere else."

"Seville is a place with so much force in its traditions, it's very difficult for it to accept the new," artist Ricardo Rodríguez Llinares, a native of the city who co-owns the restaurant ConTenedor, tells me over dinner that night. "We'll never be Barcelona. In rhythm and in climate, we're really very close to Africa. But in the 21st century, one must adapt that rhythm for modern life. The challenge is to do things well, with care, yet keep them our own."



Local singer Mor Karbasi enjoys lunch at Bar Alfalfa (above), popular for its tapas. A mix of Moorish and modern architecture lines the Guadalquivir River (opposite).







Boaters float under a tiled bridge near the 1920s complex known as Plaza de España. A baroque statue (left) depicting Jesus riding a donkey adorns the Church of El Salvador.



I find myself reconsidering my opinion of the Parasol as an un-Sevillano structure, change for the sake of change in a city that is truest to itself by leaving well enough alone. I realize it actually represents the same grand gesture Seville's cathedral, the third largest in Christendom and the city's centerpiece, did when it was built in the 15th century. The Parasol is secular, to be sure, but it's the mark of the current generation on a place that has long relied on tradition—and the detritus of a lost empire—for its grandeur. Isn't that what keeps a city alive?

ON SUNDAY, I WAKE with a palpable sense of expectation. A bullfight is scheduled for the Maestranza, the oldest, most storied bullring in the world. I haven't seen one there in years. Seville is considered the most taurine city in Spain. Along with Holy Week, bulls—toros—rank as the primary local obsession.

"Seville is the city of the bull," V. S. Pritchett wrote in his book *The Spanish Temper*, adding the telling detail that on the day King Ferdinand VII shuttered the city's great university, he opened a school for bullfighters.

One of my books chronicles Spain's 1989 bullfights. Seville's take place in spring, and I return to see them as often as I can. After attending perhaps a hundred here, I've developed a ritual for bullfight day. First, I visit a news kiosk and buy the morning newspapers. Then I settle in at a café, where I enjoy my version of a Sevillano breakfast—a hunk of bread and a wedge of the omelet-like tortilla *española*—and read what the critics say about that day's *protagonistas*, as they often call them.

Protagonists? Yes, because bullfighting isn't a sport, as many Americans assume, but an art and a spectacle. In newspapers, it's included in the cultural section, alongside theater and opera. Today's performance will feature three apprentice toreros, or *novilleros*. One, Francisco Lama de Góngora, is the nephew of Curro Romero, a bullfighter so popular here that a statue of him stands outside the Maestranza. "Until you have seen him...you have seen nothing," Orson Welles, a bullfighting aficionado, is said to have declared about Romero. But bullfights are the most unpredictable of arts. In no other discipline is a force of nature actively trying to discourage aesthetic creation.

After lunch, I change into a pressed shirt and a sport coat. If I had remembered to pack a tie, I'd wear that, too. Nice clothes aren't obligatory; plenty of tourists show up in T-shirts and shorts. But dressing well signifies respect, a recognition that the participants will be risking their lives in the pursuit of art, or, at the least, entertainment.

As for the animal-rights aspect, locals point out that the toro bravo breed would have disappeared long ago without bullfights, and the economic justification for devoting vast tracts of land to bull-grazing wouldn't exist. Furthermore, the life of a fighting bull seems infinitely better than that of a bull in captivity. And the promoters of bullfights often donate the carcasses of the slain animals to feed the poor. If you don't eat meat or wear

leather, you have the moral wherewithal to protest. Otherwise, consider a *corrida* a more visible but surely no less humane version of the slaughterhouse.

At 5:30 p.m., an hour before the bullfight begins, I walk to a bar near the Maestranza for a ritual Spanish brandy. Then I enter the turreted, gold-and-white main gate. As always, my breath catches when I emerge into the glazed-brick bowl and see the almost iridescent yellow-orange sand blanketing the ring.

The Maestranza combines the charm and scale of Fenway Park with the heft and importance of Yankee Stadium. It is many wonderful things, but comfortable isn't one of them. Dating to 1765, it is scaled for the more diminutive human body of that era. I've paid nearly \$60 for my ticket, yet I'm shoved between neighbors on either side, my knees jam against a woman in front of me, and a man behind me presses against my spine. It's like a two-hour flight on a bargain airline.

My seat is in the shade, six rows from the sand. When the first bull of the six I'll see comes close enough that I can hear it panting, the man beside me leans in. "Up close is where you really see a bullfight," he says in Spanish.

I nod but turn slightly away to deflect conversation. Like most disciplines worth caring about, bullfighting rewards careful attention. If you're chatting or otherwise distracted, you may miss a moment that makes the whole day worthwhile. There is no instant replay in the bullring.

Lama de Góngora shows some proficiency with his first bull. He maneuvers the cape well and moves like a dancer. But as he proceeds, the emotion in the plaza dissipates.

"*Nada, nada*—nothing, nothing," the man beside me says before long, and I can't disagree with him. After the two other bullfighters have taken a turn, Lama de Góngora faces his second

bull. He is determined to succeed—that is evident by the look in his eyes and the urgency with which he calls out to the animal. "Toro! Unhhhh! Toro!"

This time, though, the bull is lacking. It stands still in the sunlight, its tail swishing, refusing to charge.

"*Cuando hay toros, no hay toreros, y cuando hay toreros, no hay toros*," is the old Spanish maxim. "When there are bulls, there are no bullfighters. And when there are bullfighters, there are no bulls." I say it to my neighbor as we walk out. He nods in agreement. It's a sentiment I've expressed countless times in the same corridor over the past 25 years.

But I won't be disappointed for long. I am in Seville, with the night ahead of me. Leaving the bullring, I walk along the Guadalquivir toward the Torre del Oro, a 12-sided tower built in 1220 by the Moors, which right now glitters in the early evening sun. Down a side street, I spot a bar I haven't visited before. From the outside it looks vaguely international, like a place I might see in Brooklyn or Belgium. But when I enter and take in the tiles on the walls and casks of sherry behind the bar, I know exactly where I am. The Seville of my memories.

Food for thought:
Fried sardines (top left) fill a tapa dish in Seville. Desserts get some colorful promotion (top right) at ConTenedor restaurant, where a bowl of peppers awaits takers (bottom right). Cured *pata negra* hams (bottom left) hang in Bar Alfalfa.

READ IT,
DO IT

Experience the best of Seville, and other destinations in Spain, with National Geographic Expeditions: ngexpeditions.com/spain.

BRUCE SCHOENFELD is the author of *The Last Serious Thing: A Season at the Bullfights* (1992). Photographer JOHN KERNICK found Seville as charmingly slow-paced as on a visit years ago.

THE INSIDER

Seville, Spain

SEVILLE IS AT ITS BEST in the heat of summer, when the yellows and oranges of its sandstone buildings shimmer yet interiors remain cool. Be prepared for a Mardi Gras-like crush of people during spring's Holy Week and Feria de Abril.

WHAT TO SEE

The **Catedral de Sevilla**, the world's largest Gothic church, is home to one of the largest altarpieces ever made, a masterpiece of meticulously crafted gilded wood. In 2006 DNA tests confirmed that remains in one of the cathedral's tombs belong to Christopher Columbus. Climb the cathedral's **Giralda**

bell tower for a view of the city—and use it as a navigational aid while you explore Seville's winding streets. Opened in 2011, the **Metropol Parasol**, a structure made largely of laminated birchwood, includes a viewing platform, museum, and eateries. Artists Francisco de Zurbarán and Bartolomé Murillo



may not be as famous as Diego Velázquez and Francisco Goya, but their luminous works in Seville's **Museo de Bellas Artes**, a jewel of an art gallery housed in a former monastery, just may scramble your rankings of Spanish painters.

WHERE TO WINE AND DINE

One of Seville's most accomplished restaurants, **ConTenedor** blends informality with creativity; try its signature duck with mushrooms. **La Pepona's** array of 80-some wines by the glass is said to be the largest selection in Spain, and its tapas (sardines with tomato compote, seviche) are worthy accompaniments. You would expect a tourist trap in the prime location that is occupied by **Vinería San Telmo**, but the restaurant/bar proves both authentic and innovative; its thoughtfully prepared tapas are the size of

main courses in other places. **Eslava**, near the Alameda de Hércules, currently sits at the forefront of the new tapas scene with such playful dishes as "fried blood with onions" and "cuttlefish cigars." While no longer the underappreciated neighborhood eatery it once was, **Modesto**, in Puerta de la Carne, still serves up some of the best grilled fish in town, out on its tree-shaded patio.

WHERE TO STAY

The **Hotel Palacio de Villapanés** has all the traditional touches, including a classic Sevillano

courtyard, but offers up-to-date amenities, such as guest room computers and free Wi-Fi; from \$219. Small and stylish, the boutique hotel **Corral del Rey** occupies a 17th-century residence. Perfectly positioned on a tiny street a short walk from the city's center but out of range of tour buses, it includes such amenities as a rooftop plunge pool; from \$274.

WHAT TO READ

The vivid pages of **Iberia**, perhaps author James Michener's most successful non-fiction work, bring Spain, and Seville, to life. Hispanophile Ernest Hemingway documented the 1959 season of bullfights in Seville in his posthumous book, **The Dangerous Summer**.

ATLAS



A replica of Seville's **Giralda** tower rises in Kansas City, Missouri, at the Country Club Plaza shopping center.

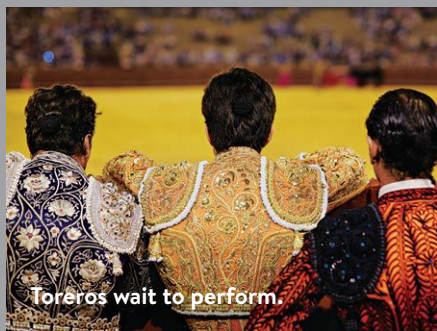
Seville's **St. Isidore** tried in the seventh century to record all knowledge in a book series—for which some today consider him the patron saint of the Internet.

The Roman emperor **Trajan** was born just outside of Seville, in the ancient Roman city of Italica.

CORRIDA CALENDAR

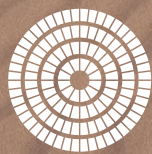
BULLY FOR YOU

The most important of Seville's *corridos de toros* take place in the Maestranza bullring just before and during the annual April fair (check for dates). Bullfights also are held on most summer Sundays and at a fair in September, and feature apprentice bullfighters. For decades the only way to buy tickets for bullfights was either to stand in a long line at the seasonally open, cash-only box office or pay a surcharge to a licensed vendor in the secondary market. Now the ticket window is accessible mornings and afternoons, and accepts credit cards. There even is a website: www.realmaestranza.com.



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I ♥ TORONTO

DON'T CALL IT A MELTING POT. TORONTO IS A PROUD MOSAIC OF 240 DISTINCT, CULTURALLY DIVERSE NEIGHBORHOODS. WE ZERO IN ON THE CITY'S BUZZING WEST END

BY NIKKI BAYLEY



Toronto synthesis: (clockwise from top left) sidewalk scenes in the Ossington and Kensington Market neighborhoods; colorful kicks at Gravitypop in Ossington

Opposite page: (clockwise from top) curio shop Blackbird Vintage Finds, in the Distillery District; coconut curry soup at Hawker Bar; the Spring Thaw cocktail at BarChef

Talk to Torontonians, and they will proudly tell you the defining characteristic of their city is its multiethnicity. In Toronto, one of the world's most ethnically diverse metropolises, no single group dominates. But it's no melting pot, more a blurred-at-the-edges mosaic—you can stand back and enjoy the harmonious whole, but get close and you'll see that each piece is separate.

This diversity goes beyond cuisine, although you can eat your way around the world here; it shines through the architecture, the religious celebrations, and the way those in the downtown core cultivate an accepting, no-hierarchy attitude. It's not perfect, but when it comes to delivering the Canadian Dream of a classless society, Toronto does it best.

Six municipalities previously composed what was called Metropolitan Toronto. They merged in

the late 1990s as a cost-cutting measure to create a single megacity known for its neighborhoods (there are some 240). And it's these hoods that are crying out to be explored once you've ticked off the tourist must-sees of the CN Tower, a show in the Entertainment District, and a morning exploring the Distillery District. Jump on a streetcar to delve deep into the one-off boutiques, quirky coffee shops, and secret bars of the West Side—where the vibrant neighborhoods of Kensington, Chinatown, Queen West, Ossington, and Parkdale all lie within blocks of each other.

At first glance Kensington can seem like a tourist trap, but chat with the U.S. draft dodger shopkeepers who arrived in the 1960s and never left or the friendly staff in the mom-and-pop stores, and you'll find an authentic sense of community. The Ossington and Parkdale hoods have cleaned up their acts, and they remain areas

SUSAN SEUBERT (BIKE), CHRIS CHEADLE/LAWY (WOMEN), KEITH BEATTY/TORONTO STAR/GETTY (SHOES)



where creative types thrive, and the cafés and bar patios are filled with people happy to shoot the breeze with a curious visitor. Jaywalking, fast-talking Torontonians aren't shy, and everyone will recommend a new cool spot or can't-miss taco joint. Just ask.

FOOD, GLORIOUS FOOD

While the suits and foodies feast on deftly prepped tasting menus across the center, head among the plaid shirts and beards of Ossington and Parkdale for culinary fireworks.

Grand Electric's tacos, especially the Baja fish, light up the palate, although the music is rock-gig loud. Try Malaysian-inspired plates like chili salt tofu at **Hawker Bar**, addictive maple bourbon bacon and deviled eggs for brunch at the **Saint Tavern**, and Asian-fusion short ribs at **Foxley**. Cross Dundas Street and venture into the **Dakota**

Tavern's basement for a magical atmosphere at its weekend all-you-can-eat Bluegrass Brunches.

Grab traditional fish-and-chips at **Chippy's** on Queen Street West, and eat them picnic style in the park opposite. Nearby, **Nadège Patisserie's** salted caramel tart is rightly famous. And if you haven't had enough, sample the huge sandwiches or maple-dipped fried chicken at **Caplansky's Deli**.

PILES OF STYLE

For aficionados of vintage clothes shopping, Toronto offers an intoxicating blend of rare high quality combined with "Oh, go on, I'll take both" low prices and seemingly endless choice. Pointed-collar shirts and original flowing maxi dresses crowd racks under the trees along Kensington Avenue. **Flashback 2** has everything from retro, sequined cocktail dresses to sophisticated evening wear. Its brother store, **King of Kensington**,

DO AS THE LOCALS DO

1

Skip breakfast and head to the **ST. LAWRENCE MARKET** for thick-cut peameal bacon rolls from Carousel Bakery.

2

Rent a bike and take the ferry from Queen's Quay to cycle the chain of islands in **LAKE ONTARIO**.

3

The car-free streets around **KENSINGTON MARKET** are filled with performers for Pedestrian Sundays from May to October.

4

Take a Silk Screen 101 workshop at **MODEL CITIZEN** with designer Julian Finkel.

5

In winter, lace up to go ice-skating for free (skate rentals: \$9) at festively lit **NATHAN PHILLIPS SQUARE**.



6

Browse Hello Kitty candies and soak up the atmosphere at the pan-Asian basement grocery store **ORIENTAL HARVEST**.

7

It's not hip, but **STONES PLACE** bar is packed every weekend with a crowd who dance as if no one's watching.

8

Get discounted entry at the **ROYAL ONTARIO MUSEUM** (below) on Fridays 4:30-8:30 p.m.





At the CN Tower, visitors can dine in a revolving restaurant 1,151 feet above Toronto and Lake Ontario.

specializes in 1960s and '70s menswear, along with leather, luggage, and hats.

Canadian designers rule in many of the Queen West boutiques. Designed in Montreal, **Yoga Jeans** are stylish and comfy; **Shopgirls**, in Parkdale, stocks locally made jewelry. Playful prom gowns, dainty knits, and silk-screened tees from mainly Canadian designers, as well as vintage shoes, belts, and bags, keep **Coal Miner's Daughter** busy.

Gravitypop's Ossington micro-department-store has quality men's and women's clothing plus a vast selection of eye-catching shoes and an intriguing "apothecary" department. For ultrahigh-end clothing head for Bloor-Yorkville, Toronto's Rodeo Drive; start at **Holt Renfrew** and carry on until your credit card begs you to stop.

For a budget alternative, Kensington's **Blue Banana Market** mixes Canadiana (from maple syrup candies to candles), blankets from Peru, drums from Africa, and owl pillows.

PARTY PEOPLE

Enthusiastically enforced 2 a.m. liquor laws suggest Toronto isn't a 24-hour city, but it's not hard to find an after-hours spot. There's also the tradition of "cold tea" in open-till-4 a.m. Chinatown restaurants—beer served in a teapot. Paying homage

to the concept but serving beer from bottles in addition to inspired cocktails, **Cold Tea Bar** (open until 2 a.m.) also has cart-served dim sum and barbecue sessions in its garden. There's no sign; entry is via the Kensington Mall—look for the red light and push the door. Or hang out at the **Embassy** with its diner seating and DJs.

The club scene in the Entertainment District is strictly for the "905-ers" (named after the area code for the city's suburbs). Follow the lead of the "416-ers" who reside in central Toronto, and head to Parkdale's **Cadillac Lounge**, with a huge, popular summer patio. Across the street, enjoy daytime pints with the friendly crowd at **Rhino**.

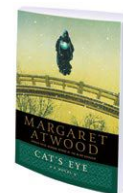
Among the music-blaring bars of Queen West is possibly one of the world's finest cocktail bars, **BarChef**, where co-owner Frankie Solarik creates expensive-but-worth-it molecular gastronomy drinks in a candlelit, velvet-curtained room. The deconstructed Aviation is a multilayered jelly that combines maraschino caviar, a foam, and edible flowers that melt in your mouth to form the perfect drink.

Currently working on her first novel, British writer **NIKKI BAYLEY** is based in Vancouver. This story is a collaboration with our U.K. edition, *National Geographic Traveller*.

TARRYING IN TORONTO

NOVELS

For literary depictions of the city's past and present, check out Margaret Atwood's classic *Cat's Eye*; Hugh Garner's *Cabbagetown*, set during the Great Depression, and its sequel, *The Intruders*; plus Cory Doctorow's fantasy masterpiece, *Someone Comes to Town, Someone Leaves Town*.



FILMS

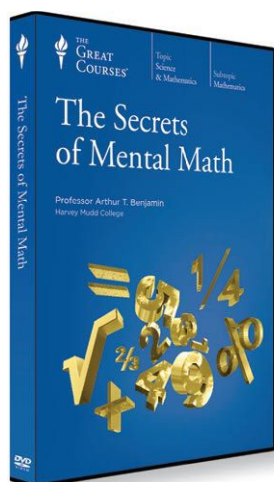
See Toronto's hip West Side in all of its sun-soaked hazy glory in local actress and director Sarah Polley's film *Take This Waltz*, starring Michelle Williams and Seth Rogen. For contrast, feel the chill of the snow-covered city in the erotic thriller *Chloe*, which shows off Yorkville.



ONLINE

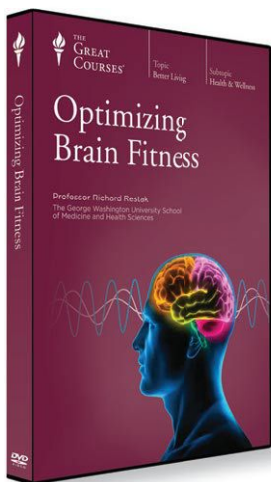
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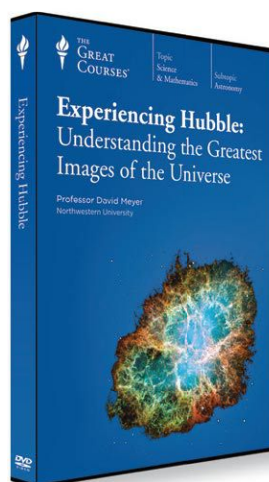
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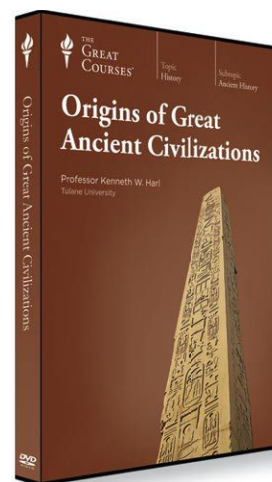
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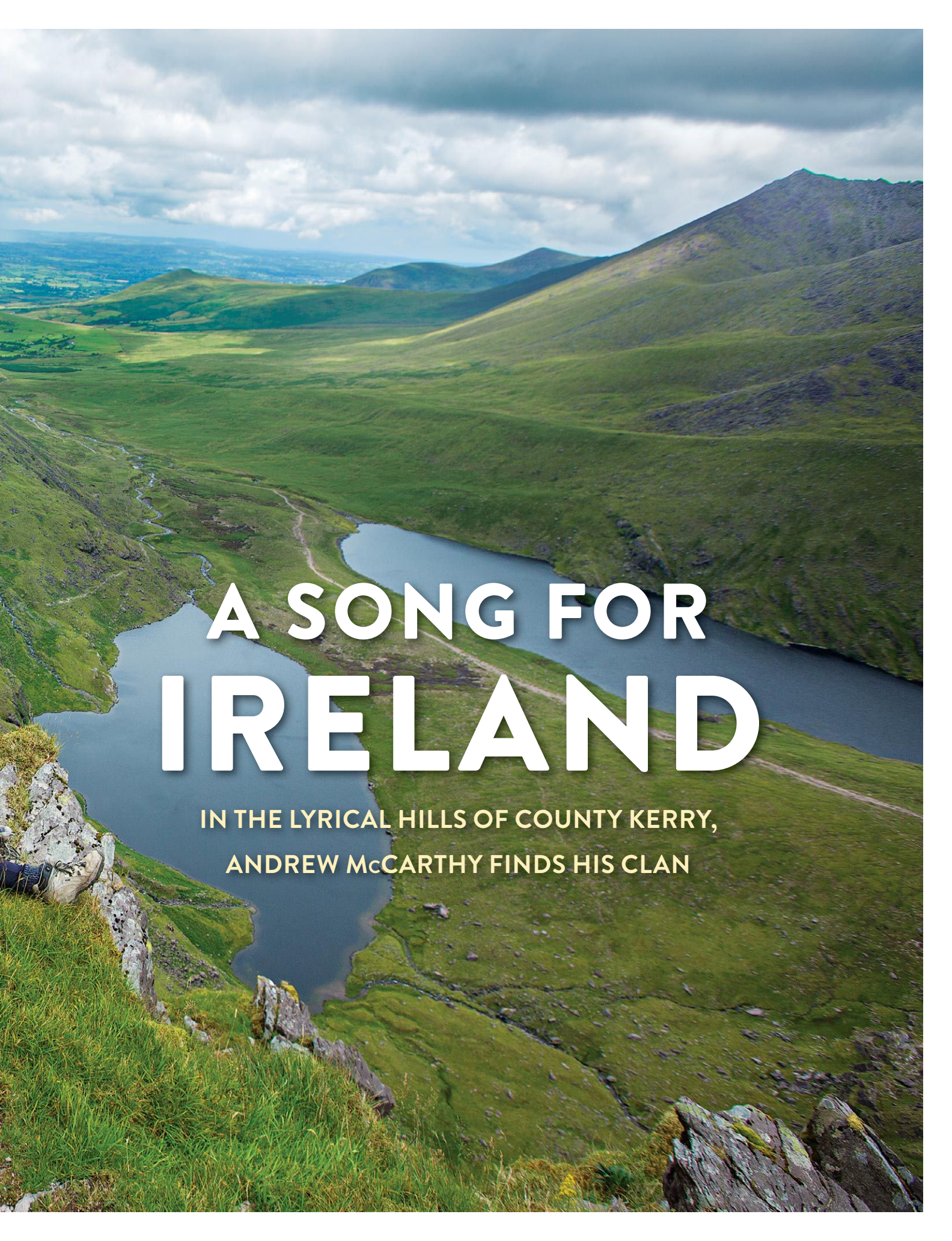
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A SONG FOR IRELAND

IN THE LYRICAL HILLS OF COUNTY KERRY,
ANDREW MCCARTHY FINDS HIS CLAN

BY ANDREW MCCARTHY

PHOTOGRAPHS BY DAVE YODER

Several miles from the sea in the west of Ireland, outside the market town of Listowel, along county road 555, a path cuts into the overgrowth and up the hillside. I almost miss it. There is no street sign, no marking of any kind. High hedges bound the single lane—brambles brush both sides of the car as I drive past. Occasionally there's a break in the wild growth, and green fields speckled with brown and white cows come into view.

This is the townland of Lacca West. The vista in this part of north Kerry is surprisingly vast and looks out toward Ballybunnion and the Atlantic Ocean—America beyond. The road tracks the hills for so long without a house in sight that I become convinced I've come the wrong way. But with no way to turn the car, I drive on. Then ahead, on my left, a small yellow cottage, with two square windows set deep in thick walls. Standing on the three-step concrete stoop, and spilling down into the drive, are two dozen people—old women, strapping men, young kids. I've never seen any of them before. This is my family.

TRACING GENEALOGY, the search for roots, has a long tradition—and has become big business. Information gathering that was once a painstaking, sometimes needle-in-a-haystack ordeal, with false leads culminating in frustrating dead ends, or hours spent sifting through crumbling church records in musty basements, has been reduced to a few mouse clicks.

My own relationship to my Irish heritage had always been one of casual pride and affectionate, if uninformed, identification. When people asked what part of Ireland





An impromptu song delights pubgoers at Dick Mack's, in Dingle.



Andrew McCarthy, wearing a Kerry football jersey they gifted him, gets to know members of his extended family in the town of Laccab West (above). Tradition holds that 16th-century Ballycarbery Castle (below), near the Ring of Kerry, belonged to the McCarthy clan.



my people hailed from, “Cork” was always my answer. Yet I had no idea exactly where my clan called home. Yes, a great many McCarthys came from the southern part of the country, but that was as much proof as I had. The only information I ever got from my father was “Pop’s father came from Ireland, a long time ago.” No one, it appeared, was interested in knowing more and, in truth, neither was I.

“I’ve got enough family,” I would always quip. “I don’t need to go looking for more trouble.”

No matter how much my Dublin-born wife tried to convince me that roots and continuity were not only important but among the most valuable things in life, I resisted.

Then one day recently I was looking through old e-mails and accidentally came upon correspondence from a woman named Michelle in Dunmanway, Ireland, about a planned gathering of the McCarthy clan in Cork. She had also offered to put me in touch with people who could help trace my own particular roots.

I had missed the gathering, but now, I decided to reach out. I thought, simply, why not?

I was told to gather as much information on my father’s lineage as possible. That didn’t take long. There wasn’t much: just a photocopy of an old marriage registry stating that in Jersey City, New Jersey, on August 19, 1885, laborer John McCarthy, “born 1857 (?)” in Ireland, son of Cornelius McCarthy and Mary Nolan, married Catherine O’Brien, born in Ireland “in 1857 (?)” at St. Joseph’s Church. There was no indication where they met, or if John’s parents, my great-great-grandparents, ever left Ireland. I knew that John and Catherine had three children, Cornelius, Johanna, and my grandfather, John, born July 10, 1890.

Without much optimism, I forwarded the little I had to Nigel McCarthy, who lived in England and was an amateur genealogist. He took the scant information and suggested I do a DNA test to see if it would provide any tangible results. The report that came back—labeled in codes like SNP R-DF5 and R-CTS365—was complete double Dutch to me, even after McCarthy’s explanation. The only thing I took away from my DNA trace was that there was a good chance I was related to Billy the Kid, as well as to a member of the Wild Bunch and Jesse James. At least my fascination with the Wild West had been explained.

Then came news.

And the news was a shock.

Nigel McCarthy had located my people, he was almost positive. It looked very much as if—using the Catholic Church’s baptism, and marriage and death records—my family could be traced back to the house of my great-great-grandfather, the place John was born and raised until he left for America. And that house, a farm, was located in...County Kerry.

Kerry? There must be some mistake, I told McCarthy. “I’m a Cork man!” I insisted.

“Apparently not,” he said simply.

It was as if I awoke, after a lifetime of supporting the New York Yankees, to find that my people actually hailed from Boston, and I was meant to be a Red Sox fan.

What could be worse? Everything I’d been led to believe, everything I’d led myself to believe, for the past 25 years was

suddenly revealed to be false. I was not from Cork at all, as I’d long boasted, but was, in fact, a Kerry man—the brunt of endless Irish jokes. Only this time, the joke was on me.

I was from the townland of Lacca West in North Kerry, a few miles south of Listowel, in the Catholic parish of Duagh. Not only that, but Nigel had identified 14 of my great-grandfather’s brothers and sisters, and tracked a fair number of their marriages. Add to this, he had ascertained the exact location of the old homestead—most probably, he suggested, in ruins now.

If it was true that Nigel had been able to locate the homesite, I’d be able to go and walk the land that my great-grandfather had walked before he left Ireland for good and came to America. The idea suddenly thrilled me.

But there was work to do first.

I had been a Cork man for all these years, or so I’d thought. If I was to embrace my new heritage, some changes in attitude

THE DINGLE IS PREDOMINANTLY IRISH-SPEAKING. IT IS REMOTE, INSULAR. YOU DON’T GET TO DINGLE BY ACCIDENT; IT IS ON THE WAY TO NOTHING BUT ITSELF.

needed to happen. I must get to know my home county, I concluded, before I walked my homeland. The best course of action would be to get an overview of the situation—from atop the highest mountain in Ireland.

CARRAUNTOOHIL is tucked into the heart of the Macgillycuddy’s Reeks Range, just beyond the borders of Killarney National Park, Ireland’s first such protected land. The area has long been one of the country’s premier tourist destinations—for that reason alone, I always gave it a wide berth. But tourist destinations become popular for a reason, and in a land of wild and rugged green spaces, Killarney is among the most audacious. Grand blue lakes reflect jagged mountains bulging up under restless skies.

In the town of Killarney I purchase a thick Aran sweater I was told I would need for my hike up 3,415-foot-tall Carrauntoohil. I had assumed the trek to the top would be little more than a stroll, but local knowledge warned otherwise. Everyone from the store clerk to my father-in-law (“People die up there, Andrew. Are you sure you’re fit enough?”) warned of the perils of the Macgillycuddy’s Reeks. I dismissed this notion as mere Kerry braggadocio. After all, if I knew just one thing about Kerry folk, it was that in a land of prodigious talkers, they were among the absolute mightiest.

This seems to hold true for John Guerin, the guide I enlist after being assured the walk is far too treacherous to undertake alone. “People who dismiss these mountains on the basis of altitude can find a lot of trouble,” Guerin promises me.

We hike past mountain lakes and beneath recently sheared sheep clinging to ledges above us. We pass outcrops with names like Hag’s Tooth Ridge and avoid the Devil’s Ladder in favor



A young boy searches
rock pools along the
111-mile Ring of Kerry,
Ireland's ultimate
scenic drive.





At the J. Curran pub, in Dingle, owner James Curran leafs through an old ledger containing mementos from Irish emigrants. His father used to lend money to people heading to America, and kept their repayment letters, photos, and postcards in thick notebooks.

of the scramble up Brother O'Shea's Gully (named after the monk who lost his life sliding down its steep pitch). Guerin is discussing the attributes of Kerry men—"There's a cynicism in the humor, to be sure"—when the bright sky grows suddenly dark. Rain begins to pelt down, then stops just as quickly, and the sky is clear again. High up, a silent plane flies over, headed west. Guerin follows my gaze. "Next stop, America."

As we scramble higher over coarse scree, Guerin calls over his shoulder, "When you're exposed, that wind can knock you right off." When I step up onto the ridge, a blast of air nearly carries me away.

Near the peak, jagged slabs of sandstone shoot up out of the ground like primitive grave markers. A single raven circles above, then rides a thermal west, over the Black Valley, the last place in Ireland to get electricity and phone service, due to its remoteness, in 1978. The Dingle Peninsula comes into view, jutting out into the Atlantic, before being lost in distant haze.

Then it is a gentle march to the top. The summit is demarcated by a large cross. I sit beneath it as the wind blows. The low clouds race overhead, while the land below changes constantly in a shadow dance.

I can feel my resistance softening to the idea of Kerry as my homeland. How can it not feel right to be connected to all this?

And so I set out deeper into Kerry, looking for further points of identification. Down in Kenmare, on Main Street, I come upon McCarthy's Bookstore. In Sneem, I fill up my car at McCarthy's Garage. And far out on the Iveragh Peninsula, past the westernmost reach of the Ring of Kerry, in Ballinskelligs, I stumble upon the ruins of a small castle. When I ask a local barman if he knows the heritage, he shoots back, "You mean the old McCarthy castle?"

Then I head to the Dingle Peninsula. Stretching 30 miles out into the Atlantic, Dingle is one of several Gaeltacht (predominantly Irish-speaking) regions in Ireland. It is remote, insular. You don't get to Dingle by accident; it is on the way to nothing but itself.

The narrow roads grow narrower. The wind is ripping off Inch Beach, a mile-long stretch of flat sand. In the village of Ballyferrier, I see nothing written in English. From every shop window, only Gaelic calls out to the passerby. Halfway out, the town of Dingle, with a population under 2,000, is the center of life. And Dingle buzzes.

The sign outside Dick Mack's pub reads "Pub and Haberdashery." Inside, the wall to the left holds shelves of scattered rubber boots and shoes; a few tweed caps hang from

Continued on page 68

ON THE IPAD

Can't get enough of Ireland? View an extended photo gallery by photographer Dave Yoder on assignment in County Kerry.

THE INSIDER

Ireland's County Kerry

KERRY IS THE MOST westerly county in Ireland, with Brooklyn, New York, jokingly referred to as “the neighboring parish.” But its people don't think of it as remote. For them, the rest of the world is to be pitied for being remote from Kerry.

WHAT TO DO

The **Skelligs**, by far the most spectacular site in Kerry, are two jagged rock islands jutting sharply out of the Atlantic about eight miles offshore. Irish priests established a monastery here between the sixth and eighth centuries, where they practiced a most ascetic form of monasticism. Visiting their beehive cells is difficult but worth the

effort. A maximum of 180 people are allowed on the larger island, Skellig Michael, per day. Boats depart (weather permitting) from Ballinskelligs, Derrynane, and Portmagee between April and September. The Skelligs also make an appearance in the next *Star Wars* movie.

Killarney is a 250-year-old tourist trap, yet for all the leprechauns and

paddywhackery, it's strangely tasteful. In the center of town is the entrance to Killarney National Park, 26,000 acres protecting the famous lakes and some of Ireland's rarest species, including the endangered red deer.

Conor Pass, on the road between Tralee and Dingle, ranks as Ireland's highest mountain pass and boasts a sweeping view of peaks, islands, and the Atlantic. Be warned: The road is very steep, and if it's raining, the road is all you'll see.

WHERE TO STAY

On the Dingle Peninsula, upscale **Gorman's Clifftop House**, in Ballydavid, has bright airy rooms looking out on the Atlantic; from \$127.

Spotless **Súgán Hostel**, in the center of Killarney, draws backpackers with its bunk beds and cozy fireplace; from \$15.

At the end of the Iveragh Peninsula, **Scariff Inn** captures a magnificent view over the Ring of Kerry drive to Kenmare River and Bantry Bay; from \$89.

The castle hotel **Parknasilla Resort and Spa** features 500 acres of manicured parkland running along the ocean shore; from \$146.

WHERE TO EAT

Historic **Doyle's**, in Dingle, is (probably) the best seafood restaurant in the county,



famous for its fish stew and fresh lobster. **Jack's Coastguard Restaurant**, in Cromane, has a spectacular edge-of-the-world setting in a restored coast guard station. Less exalted but no less wonderful are **Murphy's** ice cream parlors in Dingle and Killarney. Homemade flavors include caramelized brown bread, Irish coffee (with whiskey), and Irish Rain (with Guinness and peat-smoked sugar among the ingredients).

WHAT TO READ

The now deserted Blasket Islands, off the coast of the Dingle Peninsula, produced a crop of extraordinarily lucid memoirs of the islanders' lives, including **The Islandman**, by Tomás O'Crohan; **Peig**, by Peig Sayers;

and **Twenty Years A-Growing**, by Maurice O'Sullivan. John B. Keane's play **The Field** was made into an Academy Award-winning film, but he also published novels. **A High Meadow** is his best.

ATLAS



Kerry has won more Gaelic football trophies (“All-Ireland”) than any other county in Ireland.

The first commercial monorail in the world, the **Lartigue**, ran from Listowel to Ballybunion between 1888 and 1924.

Dingle Bay is home to **Fungie**, a lone dolphin that interacts with humans.

ANCESTRY 101

WE ARE FAMILY

To start researching your Irish family history, the first thing you need to know is what part of the island your ancestors came from. If you already know, start rummaging through the 1901 and 1911 census records, free at census.nationalarchives.ie. Otherwise, try www.irishtimes.com/ancestor. Interactive maps show the precise locations of households of every surname recorded between 1847 and 1864. For Kerry church records, look up www.irishgenealogy.ie.



Andrew McCarthy meets his clan.





TRAVEL
INTELLIGENCE
2015

8 WAYS TO SLEEP AROUND

A traveler's field guide to the
wild new world of lodging

BY MARGARET LOFTUS

FALL ASLEEP SWAYING IN THE BREEZE IN A HAND-hewn wooden orb suspended in the coastal rain forest of Vancouver Island. Kick back in a sunny, art-filled SoHo flat stocked with fluffy hotel towels, Kiehl's bath products, and an iPhone loaded with your host's tips on the neighborhood's finest. Check out a pair of your hotel's Google Glass eyewear for a tech-enhanced spin around San Francisco.

Welcome to the latest wave of lodging standouts, where the most coveted amenity is connection—to locals, nature, technology, culture, and even other travelers.

"For millennials, the thought of staying in a hotel that's exactly like a hotel in another city is a negative, unlike in other generations when it was a selling point," says Bjorn Hanson, a hospitality professor at New York University. And no matter their age, Hanson says, travelers now look to lodging as an extension of the destination, often favoring novelty and cultural relevance over minibars and late checkout. The result is a staggering array of new ways to sleep away from home. In the tradition of National Geographic field guides, here we offer tips and strategies for navigating the evolving lodging landscape:

Room with a view: Free Spirit Spheres see all seasons among the tall trees of Vancouver Island along Canada's west coast.



BOUTIQUE HOTELS

Join the Party

For travelers who yearn to blend in and feel less like, well, hotel guests, today's boutique hotels often double as community gathering spaces.

WHERE TO FIND At the **Ace Hotel** in New York's Flatiron district, club chairs, charging stations, and fast and free Wi-Fi are like candy to neighborhood novelists polishing their prose and techies taking meetings. "There are locals that are actually making stuff here, which gives it an authentic feeling," says Kelly Sawdon, one of the partners in the seven-property chainlet. For guests, "you're not an observer; you're part of that energy." (That's without the pesky work part, of course.) The downtown L.A. Ace opened last year in the renovated retro-glam United Artists building. Its ornate theater presents headliners such as the band Coldplay.

The brains behind **21c Museum Hotel**—soon to open in Durham, North Carolina's resurgent downtown—know that modern art is a sure-fire conversation starter. As with sister hotels in Louisville, Kentucky; Cincinnati, Ohio; and Bentonville, Arkansas, the lobby doubles as a contemporary art museum—free and open 24/7. The gallery "brings people back," says Alice Gray Stites, who curates the hotel collections. Hitching a ride on that theme, big chains are busy dreaming up new brands, including Marriott's **Moxy**. Debuted last fall at Milan's Malpensa Airport, the hotel is a watered-down version of the indie

entrants, with a spacious lobby/living room designed for work (charging stations, free Wi-Fi) and play (happy hours with local wine and beer).

BEST FOR Folks who like the center of the action.

CAVEAT Hanging with the cool crowd often comes at the sacrifice of old-school niceties such as valet parking, porters, and a concierge.

TIP Build time into your stay to soak up the scene.

GLAMPING

Live With Nature, in Comfort

With roots in nomadic yurts and gypsy caravans, "glamping" is basically camping without the gear, hassle, and aching back from sleeping on the ground. In recent years, the term has become a popular catchall covering everything from tricked-out tree houses to canvas tent camps.

WHERE TO FIND Grown-ups who pine for their summer camp days gravitate to **Orenda** (\$190 per person), a collection of safari-like tents in the Adirondacks backcountry where guests hike, canoe, and ride horses by day, and sip cocktails around a fire by night. Dinner is served family style and cooked over an open-flame, but forget franks and beans—we're talking herb-crusted chicken and beet salad with pine nuts.

Somewhere between a tree house and a wooden boat, **Free Spirit Spheres** (from \$155) are suspended in Vancouver Island's coastal rain forest with little to distract their inhabitants besides the neighboring cedars, spruce, and balsam fir trees. The effect verges on the spiritual,



BOOK SMART

In his new National Geographic book, Editor at Large Christopher Elliott outlines *How to Be the World's Smartest Traveler*. Here is Elliott's take on the myriad ways to reserve a room:

DIRECT If you call directly or reserve from its website, a hotel may offer a low-price guarantee, extra points, or better terms on the room, such as free cancellations. On the other hand, there's no intermediary to advocate for you if something goes wrong.

OPAQUE Websites such as Priceline and Hotwire often offer the steepest discounts on hotel rooms, but you sacrifice loyalty points and, in some cases, the ability to choose the exact property or location. Reservations are often nonrefundable. Though the hotel will never admit it, you may get its worst room.

AGENCIES Expedia, Orbitz, and similar websites buy rooms at a discount, then resell them at a marked-up rate that is still significantly below the sticker price. In other words, rates may not be the lowest available, but there's support if something goes awry. Terms vary; read the fine print.



Haute spots: Rental company Time & Place connects jet-setters with stylish spaces (above, a Paris property) and concierge help. Onefinestay.com focuses on posh pads in London (left) and other cities.

A photograph of a canvas cabin nestled in a dense forest. The cabin is illuminated from within, casting a warm glow. It has a wooden deck and a chimney. The forest floor is covered in fallen leaves and mossy rocks. Tall trees surround the cabin, creating a serene atmosphere.

Orenda's furnished canvas cabins make it easy to go back to basics in the Adirondacks of New York. Opposite: In Portland, an outpost of local coffee roaster Stumptown perks up the Ace Hotel.

says founder and builder Tom Chudleigh: “We’ve become disconnected. A sphere speaks to unity with each other and the trees.” For an experience rooted in luxury—with a price tag above the clouds—there’s Montana’s new Cliffside camp at **Resort at Paws Up**, overlooking the Blackfoot River, made famous in the film *A River Runs Through It*. Guests enjoy heated bathroom floors, meals, and a butler. The grand total to sleep in a tent? At least \$1,500. Guided fly-fishing is extra.

BEST FOR Nature enthusiasts without the gear, time, or patience necessary to make camp.

CAVEAT Indoor plumbing isn’t always de rigueur. Verify before booking if outhouses don’t appeal.

TIP The glamping season is limited, so book early—Orenda’s tents fill up in February.

PEER-TO-PEER LODGING

Live With (Charming) Strangers

Struggling to make rent on their San Francisco loft in 2007, two friends invited some out-of-towners to crash in their living room to earn some extra cash. Fast-forward eight years, and their scheme, aka **Airbnb**—estimated to be worth several billion dollars—has upended the hospitality trade, spawning countless competitors.

Experts say there’s more fueling the phenomenon than the prospect of saving a few bucks. “[Guests] feel connected to the community

in a way that’s more genuine,” says Arun Sundararajan, a New York University business professor who studies the sharing economy. “You can ask a hotel concierge for local activities, but that always has a commercial sheen.”

WHERE TO FIND Covering more than 34,000 cities, Airbnb’s spectrum is astonishing—from pullout couches to historic castles and solar-paneled spaces like the Off-grid itHouse in Pioneertown, California. The digs on **nightswapping.com**, a cash-free exchange based on credits, range from an apartment guest room in Bangkok to a villa in Cárdenas, Cuba. **Onfinestay.com** lists only town houses in the most affluent zip codes of New York, Los Angeles, London, and Paris and stocks them with the sort of high-count linens, plush towels, and French-milled soaps you’d expect at the Four Seasons, as well as an iPhone loaded with host tips. The formula was a hit with Felicia Newberry, who spent a weekend at a SoHo apartment rented through the service. She likens the experience to taking the train instead of flying: “It’s more of a story.”

BEST FOR Extroverts who crave a local link

STAY WITH US

National Geographic Unique Lodges of the World is a new collection of sustainable hotels, lodges, inns, and resorts. www.natgeolodges.com



AVOID TRAPS

These common pitfalls could turn an overnight into a nightmare:

SCAMS If the owner or manager of a rental you found listed online insists you wire money, refuse—the home may not exist, or the real owner may be the victim of phishing. Always opt for secure Internet reservation systems that protect your information and accept major credit cards, or ask to book by phone.

MISTAKES Listings are often filled with hyperbole, whether written by a professional or an individual, and photos can be distorted with overstaging and wide-angle lenses. Consult independent reviews before booking. When booking an alternative lodging, it’s a wise idea to speak with the owner or manager, and you also have the right to ask for references from previous renters.

FEES Room rates may exclude taxes and fees. You can’t avoid government-imposed bed taxes or mandatory tipping and resort fees, but be wary of “gotcha” fees that cover use of the phone, Wi-Fi, room safe, and newspaper delivery. Some rentals also have cleaning fees, damage waivers, or security deposits. —C.E.



SUSAN SEUBERT (COFFEE SHOP), DANA ROMANOFF (TENT, OPPOSITE PAGE)



Memorable lodging extras add value. Clockwise from top: With its flagship hotel in Louisville, Kentucky, 21c Museum Hotel claims North America's first museum to focus exclusively on art of the 21st century. Kid & Coe family rentals wow guests of all ages with details like claw-foot tubs stocked with bath toys. At Barcelona's Generator hostel, festive hanging lanterns in the lounge set a party mood.



(choose rentals where the hosts are present) as well as introverts who steer clear of bed-and-breakfasts (search “entire place” when booking). **CAVEAT** Booking typically requires more steps, such as verifying your identity. And renter beware: Some cities, such as Charleston, South Carolina, ban rentals for less than 30 days; crack-downs on violations could lead to cancellations. **TIP** Before booking that “charming,” “strategically located” house, take a virtual tour of the neighborhood with Google Maps Street View.

MULTIGENERATIONAL TRAVEL

Bring the Family, Not the Stress

A new crop of niche outfits offer rentals for multigenerational vacations, equipped with personalized amenities and family essentials—whether guests need a high chair, a pediatrician, or restaurant recommendations for picky eaters. **WHERE TO FIND** After traveling the world managing her husband’s music career, Zoie Kingsbery Coe noticed few hotel rooms with, say, childproof electrical outlets once her tots came along. That scarcity planted the seed for her family-focused online listing service, **Kid & Coe**, which launched in early 2013. Some 400 listed properties range from a two-bedroom pad in Tel Aviv (\$180 a night) furnished with bunk beds and toys, to a sprawling villa in Barbados (\$2,285 a night) with a pool and optional babysitting service.

For families who need on-the-ground help, **Time & Place** is a vacation rental company with concierge services that fall within the realm of a butler cum travel agent. D.C. attorney Channing Cooper booked a three-bedroom apartment in Paris’s Le Marais to celebrate her 30th birthday with her parents and grandmother. She tapped the concierge for everything from hard-to-get tables to French Open tickets.

BEST FOR Those pressed for time but not money. **CAVEAT** Overplanner? Skip the extra expense and go for a traditional beach house.

TIP Reach out to the concierge as soon as you book, and provide as many details as possible.

BUDGET STAYS

Reconsider the Hostel

Forget the seamy digs you knew as a broke backpacker in Southeast Asia. Young entrepreneurs have introduced a no-frills model of shared rooms and baths in revitalized neighborhoods in cities such as Detroit, Cleveland, and Austin. Cleaner and pricier—though still cheaper than daily parking in big cities—many new-wave hostels have added private rooms and extras, including free Wi-Fi, towels, and storage, to appeal to a wider audience. Seasoned traveler Lyndsay Bouchal says she prefers hostels: “I love

the communal feel, the camaraderie, and that instantaneous connection you make with most everyone there.” Collin Ballard, co-founder of Austin’s Firehouse hostel, sums up the vibe: “A hostel is like a hotel, but the *s* stands for social.”

WHERE TO FIND London-based hostel chain **Generator** relies on a formula of sleek design and free Wi-Fi, with plans to expand to more cities this year. Rates at the Barcelona hostel range from \$12 for a dorm-style bed to an eye-popping \$320 for a private penthouse. Opened in 2012, the **Cleveland Hostel** in the trendy Ohio City neighborhood has a shared kitchen, free towels, bike storage, and a roof deck (from \$26 a night); Austin’s **Firehouse** hostel sits above a cocktail bar in a 19th-century fire station and serves free breakfast (from \$29); and Pittsburgh’s under-development **Southside Traveler’s Rest** is near the Allegheny Passage, a prime locale for bicyclists starting or ending the trail.

BEST FOR Low-maintenance, adventurous types.

CAVEAT Light sleeper? Pack earplugs.

TIP Decode if a hostel is new breed or old dump by scanning the reviews at Hostelworld.com.

ALL-INCLUSIVE RESORTS

Class Up Your Vacation

Once content to largely ignore local culture, more resorts are introducing activities designed to immerse guests in their surroundings. That is, when they’re not immersing themselves in the infinity pools.

WHERE TO FIND Raising chickens and learning the two-step could be courses at a Texas community center, but they’re also among the most popular offerings at **Travaasa Experiential Resort** in Austin, which opened in 2011 along with a resort in Hana, Maui (think ukulele lessons and lei-making). On the Riviera Maya, **Barceló Maya Caribe Resort** guests can join a *temazcal*, a Maya sweat lodge ceremony in a circular stone hut; an herbal concoction is poured over hot stones to create a purifying steam. On Mexico’s Pacific coast, the **Four Seasons Resort Punta Mita** hosts a Huichol Indian sunset ritual, Spanish lessons, and lectures on cultural topics like mole sauce.

BEST FOR R & R lovers who like to learn a bit, too.

CAVEAT Don’t expect to be a mole-making or two-stepping all-star when you get home. Deep dives into cultural heritage, these aren’t.

TIP Check the fine print on what’s included.

HOTEL GADGETS

Tech Yourself Out

Mid-century Americans checked into hotels to give air-conditioning and color TV a whirl, before such appliances became household



BOUNCE BACK

When bad things happen to good guests, time and temperament are of the essence:

TALK IT OUT Whether the accommodations are not as advertised or the terms differ from your reservation, voice your displeasure to the property owner or manager as soon as possible. Real time is almost always best because there are more solutions, whether fixing the problem, knocking a few dollars off your bill, or moving you to another site.

GET IT IN WRITING

Your rental contract is your friend. Refer to the written agreement when a major complaint comes up. You’ll know what your rights are and can make a more informed argument.

APPLY THE LAW

You don’t have to be a lawyer to look up state or local laws that apply to your rental. Though ordinances tend to favor the innkeeper, citing a law that may apply will underscore your seriousness.

BE NICE

Tact goes a long way, especially with home rentals. Remember you are a guest in someone’s home, so complaints are bound to be taken more personally. —C.E.



GO GREEN

Some 71 percent of hotel guests consider the environment when booking hotels, according to a TripAdvisor study. Lodgings lighten their impact in a variety of ways, big and small:

CHAIN LINK Marriott, Hampton Inn, and others participate in the Global Soap Project, which sanitizes discarded guest soap to distribute to impoverished communities worldwide. And dozens of hotels in Washington, D.C., including the Hay-Adams, Kimpton, and the Fairmont, donate old furniture, bedding, robes, and towels to Keys for the Homeless, a local foundation that helps transition families in need into housing.

INDIE INGENUITY

Some toasters use more energy than it takes to light Toronto's three-story Planet Traveler Hostel, which recaptures waste heat. In Yountville, California, Bardessono automatically adjusts thermostats and mechanically controls venetian blinds when sensors recognize guests are out of the room. And at the LEED silver-certified Palazzo in Las Vegas, turf stands in for grass, while a rooftop solar-energy system heats pool water. —M.L.



Mexico's Four Seasons Punta Mita offers tours of nearby agave fields.

staples. Travelers still look to hotels to test-drive technology, and hotels hoping to appeal to digital natives are tripping over their discarded Ethernet cords to one-up each other with tech flash—from the cool to the curious.

WHERE TO FIND At San Francisco's **Stanford Court**, the Google Glass Explorer Package includes overnight accommodations and the use of the glasses, along with tips, such as how not to be a "glasshole" (ask a person's permission before snapping a photo of them, for one). The hotel is also working on a lobby tech bar with devices like Fitbits and GoPro cameras available for checkout, plus nostalgic throwbacks (Atari, the Sony Walkman). At the new 230-room **citizenM** in New York City, guests check in on touch-screen kiosks and control the room temperature, television, window blinds, and lighting with the swipe of a "Moodpad" tablet. Times Square's futuristic **Yotel Hotel** features a Jetsons-like robotic luggage handler and a motorized bed that expands with the touch of a button. Guests at Hiltons worldwide solicit local advice by directing questions on Twitter to *@HiltonSuggests*. And no more rousting knocks from housekeeping at the **Umstead Hotel and Spa** in Cary, North Carolina: A motion-detecting system tells management if a room is occupied.

BEST FOR Early adopters and gadget freaks.

CAVEAT Luddites, leave your pride at home: Dial the front desk for help, or miss out on the fun.

TIP Follow hotel brands on social media for perks that range from loyalty points to free nights.

NIGHT AT THE MUSEUM

Be an Exhibitionist

Why let kids have all the slumber party fun? Last summer, New York's **American Museum of Natural History** hosted an adults-only sleepover—complete with three-course dinner and curator presentation—in a spin-off of its hugely popular Night at the Museum series for kids. A sequel is planned for 2015; meanwhile, more museums are rolling out the sleeping bags.

WHERE TO FIND With stand-up comedy, a show on the sex lives of insects, a movie marathon, edible insect snacks, and a cash bar, the adult sleepover at London's **Natural History Museum**, dubbed *Dino Snores for Grown-Ups*, feels more frat party than field trip. The **Smithsonian's National Zoo** in Washington, D.C., keeps it to a dull roar by comparison, with a wine and cheese welcome, a keeper-led tour of the exhibits, and a tent. The **Rubin Museum** in New York hosts a "dream-over" each May; last year's participants slept next to a piece of art selected for them and, the next morning, had their dreams interpreted.

BEST FOR Science and art nuts who fantasize about cuddling up to their favorite exhibits.

CAVEAT You can pretty much guarantee this won't be the best sleep you've ever had.

TIP Pounce on tickets as soon as programs are announced; some events sell out within hours.

MARGARET LOFTUS, a contributing editor, charted the ins and outs of top airports in "The Perfect Layover" (November 2013).



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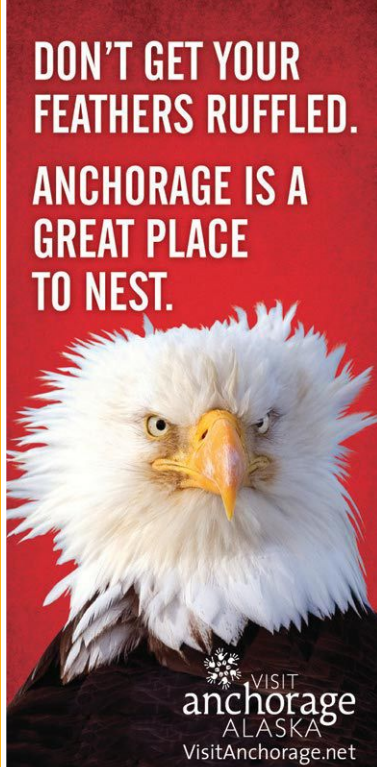
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County Kerry, Ireland

Continued from page 56

hooks. To the right, an old wooden bar lines the wall. Bartenders grab and pour bottles with lightning speed to service the throng. Two semiprivate drinking areas known as snugs, one beside the door, another at the far end of the bar, resemble nothing so much as confessionals. A few Tiffany-style lamps hang from above. Conversation, pitched over the din, is easy, considering the closest human is a few inches away.

Cirnan O'Brian has just sailed his boat down from Galway and is beginning a tale when a young fella climbs up on the bar, his head inches from an exposed lightbulb. He begins to sing a rendition of the Welsh national anthem. Impossibly, the crowd grows silent.

As we listen, O'Brian leans closer to me: "Those Welsh can sing, I'll give them that." The Welshman continues, gathering confidence and volume.

Suddenly I hear O'Brian growl, "Not in my house, he doesn't. Not in Kerry!" He shoves past me and in a flash is up on a wobbling stool. He lets rip a passionate, if unpolished, rendition of the Irish national anthem—hand over his heart. For a few moments the two men sing over each other, battling, without looking at one another. But soon the Welshman acquiesces and steps off the bar. As O'Brian finishes, he climbs down to roof-raising adulation.

The next day I visit low-key pub J. Curran, a few doors away, on Main Street. Soft-spoken James Curran draws a pint as he tells me about his father, who ran the pub before him. His father used to lend money to folks who were headed to America. Curran is in possession of their repayment letters, and I am curious for a look. He retrieves several overflowing ledgers from beneath the bar.

A letter sent from Brooklyn on November 5, 1929, is typical. "Enclosed you will find 3 pounds. It isn't much, but it will lessen the amount. I will send the rest later on, please God." Many of the letters are written in Gaelic. I don't find any correspondence from any McCarthys, but the letters bring home to me what a massive journey to America it must have been for so many.

With renewed passion and regard for

the land of my forefathers, I race north. Past Tralee, the drama of the Kerry landscape becomes considerably subtler. The untamed mountains give way to rolling hills, which become almost flat in places.

I pull into the market town of Listowel and make my way to the hotel on the square. Nigel McCarthy has done the laborious research locating my clan, but when I need a man on the ground, Ger Greaney steps up. Greaney has a passion for the past, a detective's relentlessness, and a flair for the dramatic. We had spoken several times while I was still back in America, and he said he would have more news when we met.

He is waiting in the lobby of my hotel, documents in hand. With his glasses and a Kerryman's biting wit, Greaney strikes me as a friendly, if sarcastic, librarian.

I had originally intended to simply walk the land of my great-grandfather, and perhaps visit the site of what I was sure would be the ruins of the old homestead—if it could even be found.

It can indeed be found, Greaney assures me. In fact, the house still stands, and is inhabited by my second cousin once removed (meaning that my great-grandfather John, who had come over to America, and the grandfather of the woman now living in the house had been brothers). She is home now, awaiting my visit.

Excitement and trepidation sweep over me. My once frosty relationship with my family back home had certainly warmed over the years (thanks in no small part to my wife), but I still find myself keeping a distance more often than not. My own children have, of course, burst my heart open and have gotten me thinking about legacy. Yet the idea that I am now about to bridge the gap across the Atlantic that had been carved open more than a hundred years earlier seems almost comical. I am, to say the very least, an unlikely ambassador.

I get into my car. A few miles out of town, just before the few shops and homes of Duagh, an unmarked, narrow lane veers up into the hillside. I think I made a wrong turn, and then I see them. Standing on the stoop of a small yellow

home that looks out over the valley below are two dozen members of what turns out to be my family.

A roar goes up as I disembark. A gray-haired woman with mischievous eyes behind large glasses steps up and shakes my hand, then embraces me. This is Nell Fitzgerald, my second cousin once removed. Nell's daughter Mary, my third cousin, introduces me to her husband, who presents me with a Kerry football jersey. When I put it on, all hell breaks loose. An endless round of embraces from more cousins and hus-

bands and wives of cousins and children follow. Dozens, hundreds, of photos are taken. Inside we cram into the small living room, a picture of the Virgin Mary framed on the wall. Above the door hang the McCarthy and Fitzgerald family crests. I squeeze between Nell and her sister Mary on the sofa.

We scour the family tree Greaney had wisely provided me. Tea is served. We eat cheese sandwiches and fairy cakes. The children run in and out of the house. Everyone has questions for me, about my life, about my father—would he be able to come over?

"Can you dance at all?" Nell wants to know. "The McCarthys were great dancers. My grandfather used to turn a bucket over, get up on it, and dance a jig."

Among my relations are a nurse, an army sergeant, a surveyor, and various laborers. At one point, a cousin sings a beautiful ballad as a hush falls over the boisterous room. We go outside and take more photos. We stroll down the lane to the remains of the O'Brian house—long ago two of the McCarthy boys had married two of the O'Brian sisters. There are more hugs. It is the kind of active connecting I'd always run so far from in the past. Their generosity touches me deeply.

Later, as I finally drive away, I see two dozen family members, strangers no more, waving in my rearview mirror.

This story is adapted from *Journeys Home*, published by National Geographic Books in February 2015, with essays by 26 authors including **ANDREW McCARTHY**. Photographer **DAVE YODER** is based in Milan.

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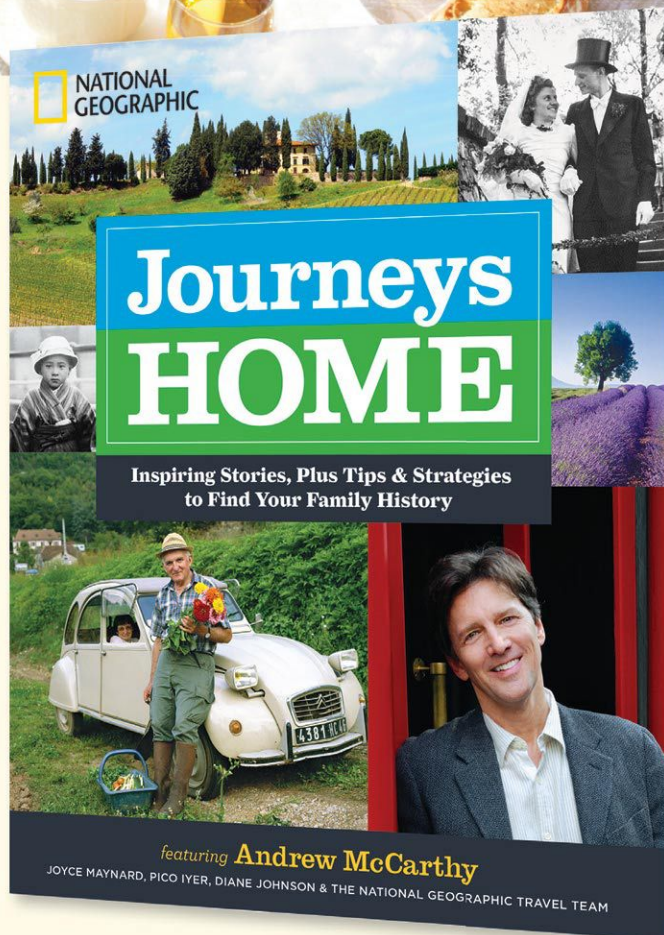
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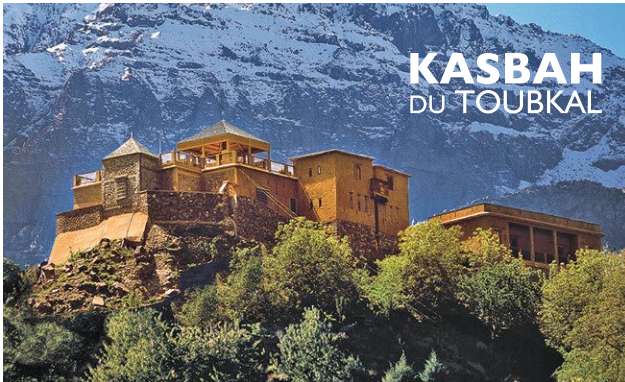
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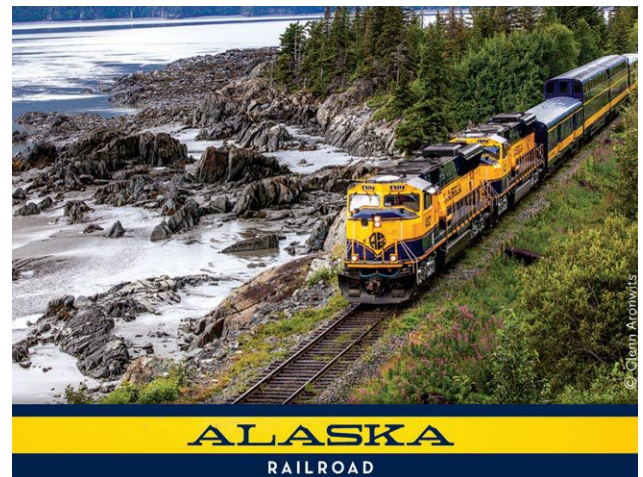


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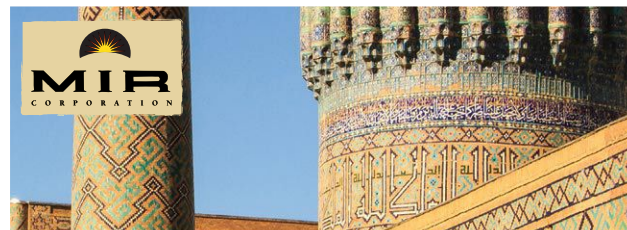
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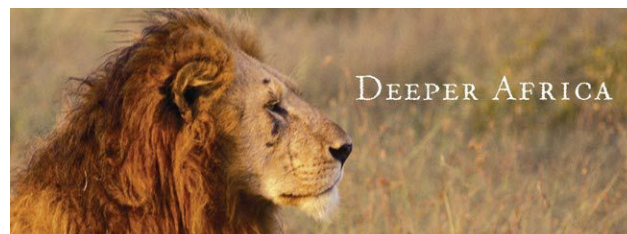
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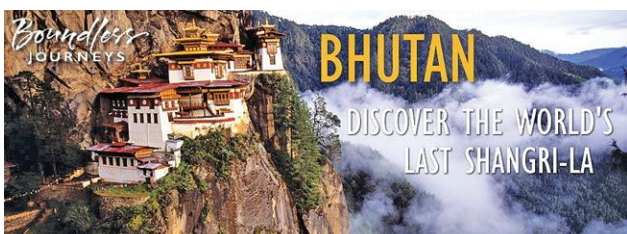
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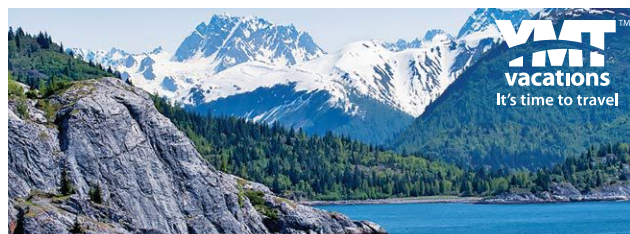
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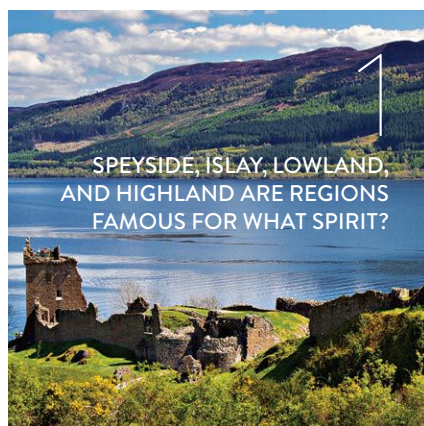
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Test Your Travel IQ

By GEORGE W. STONE



1

SPEYSIDE, ISLAY, LOWLAND, AND HIGHLAND ARE REGIONS FAMOUS FOR WHAT SPIRIT?

2

THE APPLE TRACES ITS ROOTS TO THE AREA AROUND ALMATY IN WHAT COUNTRY?



3

THE CHINESE DELICACY YAN WO (EDIBLE BIRD'S NEST) IS MADE FROM THE SALIVA OF WHICH BIRD?



4

RESIDENTS OF WHICH NATION CONSUME ABOUT FOUR POUNDS OF OYSTERS PER CAPITA EACH YEAR?



5

NAME THE COOKIE ASSOCIATED WITH WWI SOLDIERS FROM AUSTRALIA AND NEW ZEALAND.

JERUSALEM ARTICHOKEs ARE NATIVE TO WHICH COUNTRY?

6



7

WHICH COUNTRY IS THE LARGEST PRODUCER OF SUGARCANE?

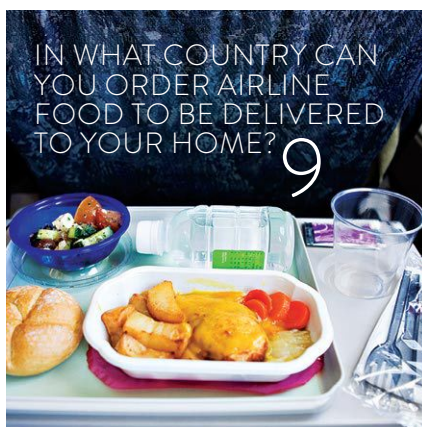
8

DRINKING STRAWS HAVE BEEN TRACED TO THE SUMERIANS, BUT THE MODERN PAPER STRAW WAS INVENTED TO DECORATE A MINT JULEP IN WHICH CITY?



9

IN WHAT COUNTRY CAN YOU ORDER AIRLINE FOOD TO BE DELIVERED TO YOUR HOME?



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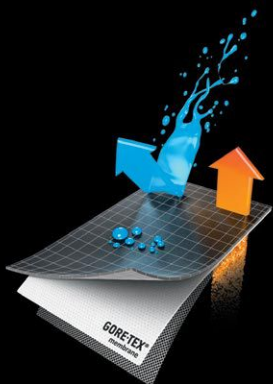
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